

KINFOLK A BREED APART



20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION
WEREWOLF
THE APOCALYPSE

KINFOLK

A BREED APART



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Dedication

To the memory of Wolf #10, the “Big Guy” of the Yellowstone Wolf Reintroduction Program. May your and #9’s descendants one day breed true.



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JERIAN

Introduction to *Canis Homo Familiaris*

*"You can choose your friends but you sho' can't choose your family,
an' they're still kin to you no matter whether you acknowledge 'em or not,
and it makes you look right silly when you don't."*

— Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Kinfolk are those special people who carry the seed of the Garou within them. They themselves did not “breed true” — they’re not Garou — but they have the potential to give birth to Garou, as well as contribute to a lineage of Kinfolk who might one day also birth True Garou.

There is no single template for Kinfolk. They vary by tribe, culture, socioeconomic standing, geography, etc., in other words, they’re just like humans everywhere, except that they’re related to werewolves. While many of them know they’re related to werewolves, and are imprinted by Garou culture, some of them have no clue that the wolf runs deep in their veins, even if it’s destined never to come out. The former are called *kenning* Kin — they’re “in the know” — while the latter are called *callow* Kin — they’re ignorant of the greater reality to which their blood ties them.

Being a Kin who never Changes is essentially tragic. You aren’t going to be top dog, ever. Although this also means you get to avoid charging into Wyrms dens, you also cannot ever claim the glory of a Garou. If you are so unlucky as to actually love a Garou to whom you’re married or bonded, you know that she might not come home one day, or might crawl home nearly dead and terribly scarred, just to go out

to do it again once she’s healed. Even worse, she might take her anger and frustration out on you — she is a cauldron of Rage, after all. As a Kin, you have a constant target on your back from the Garou’s enemies. But you might also have a blessing, the invisible care and attention of spirits loyal to the Garou. Your big brothers and sisters are always looking out for you, and you know, no matter what, that you play an important part in a war; even if your job is simply to keep the home fires burning.

Themes and Moods

Themes of stories and chronicles that involve Kinfolk (either as Storyteller, or player characters) often involve themes of duty, obligation, overwhelming responsibility, and family ties. The Kinfolk have an imperative from their Garou cousins: be fruitful and multiply... even if you don’t want to.

The weight of family expectations is a classic source of drama, conflict, and paranoia. Face it, the Garou are scary, even if they are your parents, siblings, or children. You are of them but you are not them. They can tear you to pieces

in seconds when Rage explodes, and their regretful tears afterward are little consolation. Kinfolk often feel they have to walk on eggshells around their cousins, and this warps their behavior with one another. You always hurt those closest to you, and Kinfolk families are often seething knots of repressed anger, misplaced judgment, blind ambitions, and heedless commands imposed from parent to child.

It doesn't have to be this way. Although conflict is the heart of a story, moments of joy, awe, and wonder are also the birthright of the Kin. There's a war going on, but it's a war for something beautiful and desperately needed — the living world of Gaia. Kinfolk, like the rest of us mere mortals, can't peer across the Gauntlet into the Umbra, however, the spirit world surrounds them and is closer to them than to the vast majority of non-Kin. They live in a world more alive than most, and sometimes they even get to know it. They might not be able to summon a spirit on demand, but they might catch a glimpse of one riding the sunbeam breaking through the forest trees at dawn. These moments of grace might be few, but they're more assured to Kin than to most.

Spiritual Genetics

Modern Garou often speak about a Garou "gene" that determines whether a given child is actually a Garou or is just a Kinfolk. In other words, it's an inheritance that is determined in the womb — or even prior to conception, if you believe some of the wilder spiritual speculations about predestination among Gaia's warriors.

It makes a certain amount of sense to think of it in terms of the science of genetics. According to this view, there is a particular gene that is transmitted from one or both of the parents to the child. From there, things get murky: is this gene always expressed, or is it expressed through certain environmental and/or developmental factors? If the former, then only some people have it, and those always become Garou. If the latter, then perhaps all Kinfolk have the chance of Garou gene expression, although the odds of the proper factors coming together to turn on the gene are rather low.

And yet, all attempts to identify this gene have come to naught. Many have tried, and many keep trying, pouring vast amounts of research dollars into the project. It is the *raison d'être* of D.N.A. (Developmental Neogenetics Amalgamated), the fabled Philosopher's Stone of their research. As well, many Technocratic Progenitors have attempted the project, and although some have produced interesting and creative results, it's as if they're only imitating the alleged gene, rather than isolating and manipulating it. Pentex, too, has tried to master the gene, and although they've been able to alter Garou physiology in various ways that might be related to mutating the mysterious gene, they have yet to find and code it.

Perhaps it doesn't exist. Or, as some Glass Walkers have theorized, it is a gene that is partly spiritual. It exists somehow on both sides of the Gauntlet, one foot in ephemeral matter, the other in material-world molecular matter. Regardless, no Glass Walker has yet found this spirit gene, either.

Begettings

The Garou of old, before science began its talk of DNA strands and molecules, saw the issue of Garou inheritance as one of spiritual destiny tied intimately with physical bloodlines. Non-Kinfolk don't produce Garou. Period. That is known. Only someone who has blood coursing through his veins from a line of Garou inheritance can produce a Garou, even if many generations have passed since that Garou blood was introduced. It's a matter of the blood. It's a matter of family.

Much is made among Garou about the importance of pack bonds, sept bonds, and tribal bonds. Too often unspoken are the bonds of family. One reason for this is that family is too close, too foundational. It doesn't need to be spoken of, because it's so bloody obvious and inescapable. The other reason, though, is a hint of shame: most family aren't Garou, they're Kin. Non-shapechangers, fragile mortals, blind and dumb to the spirit world and the dangers of the Wurm. To speak of them is to remind one that family is too often a liability.

Kin are begat. This archaic, Biblical term for begetting children also refers to the genealogical lists that mark who came from whom. Among the Old Testament-era Hebrews, this was a matter mainly of worldly inheritance: which son would inherit the family wealth and the patriarch's position, and which sons would not. For Garou, it's a matter most dear: a record of who carries the precious hope of the future.

Most tribes keep very good records of who their Kin are. But time and calamity can erode anything. Septs are wiped out in battle and oral tales die unheard. Sometimes, a Kin line is lost. Even here, though, there is hope. Far removed in time from the initial spark of Garou blood, they can still, against all odds, produce a Garou.

Many Garou came to believe that Kinfolk who bred with non-Kinfolk produced non-Kinfolk children. Blame it on the obsession with purity and keeping lines intact. The truth is, that there is always a chance in such pairings that the offspring could inherit the Kinfolk factor.

Some Garou, such as the Silver Fangs, dwell overmuch on issues of genetics, such as whether a given child is full blood, half-blood, one-quarter blood, etc. Suffice it to say that, regardless of the fraction of DNA inherited, a Kinfolk breeding with a non-Kinfolk can still pass on the wolfen lineage.

The mechanism for why and how this works — dominant genes, recessive genes — is a mystery that may never be solved.

Kinfolk can still pass the subtle seed of the Garou down through the generations – generations of distant Kin very often forgotten by actual Garou. *Anybody* could harbor the wolven bequest, and it can – against all odds – even express itself at any time throughout life.

Glossary

Formal terminology

Bequest, the: Old-form term for the Garou “gene,” the spiritual inheritance from birth that eventually results in the First Change. Example: “Watch this child well – she might have the Bequest.” See also *Garou gene*.

Callow: A Kinfolk who is unaware of the Garou and his or her relation to them. He might suspect that he is somehow different from others, but has no factual knowledge to base this on. Compare to *kenning*.

Fellowship: A formal organization of Kinfolk, usually formed to aid communication or genealogy research, to help the Garou cause in some manner, or for the mutual aid and protection of Kinfolk from their cousins’ Rage.

Garou gene: Modern term for *the Bequest*. Despite Glass Walker, and certain human attempts to pinpoint this alleged gene, it eludes scientific study.

Kenning: A Kinfolk who is aware of the Garou and his or her relation to them. Compare to *callow*.

Kin Fetch: A special type of spirit used to watch over a Kinfolk and alert the Garou tribe if a Firsting occurs.

Plebe pack: See *Subaltern pack*.

Subaltern pack: A tightknit formal grouping of Kinfolk, in emulation of Garou packs.

Informal/Slang

Golden apple: A term for a Kin who the family believes will one day breed “true” (i.e., become a Garou), despite there being no known way to accurately predict which Kin will become Garou. A play on the phrase “the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.” Compare to *rotten apple*.

Idiot: Derogatory term for callow Kin.

Lethal mutation: A derogatory term used by certain kenning Kinfolk to refer to the First Change, when one of their kind breeds true and becomes Garou. Some Garou take offense at this term, but others recognize that it comes from a place of impotent envy and are willing to pretend they didn’t hear it.

Mare: A female Kinfolk who serves no purpose other than breeding stock; a derogatory term. See also *stud*.

Nanna: A Kinfolk who cares for Garou children or pups. The term applies to all genders.

Rotten apple: A derogatory term for a Kin that does not breed “true” (i.e., become a Garou). A play on the phrase “the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.” Compare to *golden apple*. Sometimes used to refer to Kin who become corrupted.

Stud: A male Kinfolk who serves no purpose other than breeding stock; a derogatory term. See also *mare*.

Unfortunate: Term for callow Kin.

Ushers: Term used by kenning Kinfolk to refer to a “fallen” Kinfolk family, one that is suffering bad times or is on the outs with their Garou cousins. From the Edgar Allen Poe story, “The Fall of the House of Usher.”





Chapter One: Kinfolk Society

*And, you know, there is no such thing as society.
There are individual men and women, and there are families.*
— Margaret Thatcher

Being Kinfolk

A young girl grows up amid an extended family, which not only protects her and her siblings from most types of exposure to the outside world, but also alternately smothers her with lists of things she can and cannot do; often leaving her to figure out things for herself in dangerous situations. She tries to question her relatives, either asking for explanations or for a relaxation of the rules. She meets with equivocation at best (“Someday, you’ll understand.”) or hostility at worst (“Don’t question my orders, child!” *Slap.*).

Occasionally, a special relative visits the family home-
stead. It may be the usually absent father, perhaps one of the grandparents, an aunt or uncle, even an elder sibling. When Aunt Crystal arrives, everything in the family stops, and action revolves around the visitor. Even the family elders defer to her, giving her the best seat in the house and at the table, feeding her first and cooking special foods for her that the money-saving family rarely sees. Expensive cuts of steak appear at each meal, even breakfast.

Eventually, the girl becomes part of the family secret. They are Kinfolk, human relatives of the Garou. They play

the role of back-up singers in the band, extras or supporting actors in a movie or play, members of the choir, a NASCAR driver’s pit crew, the surgeon’s nameless operating team. They are effectively the civilian suppliers of an army that fights a supernatural enemy in an unspoken war. And, though the girl may not like the answers she gets, at least she finds that it all meant *something*. And, often, the knowledge makes her proud.

This chapter provides the low-down on what it means to live as one of the Kinfolk, the good, the bad, the ugly — and the heartbreakingly beautiful. Kinfolk live a life fraught with meaning, but a life that puts them in a subservient or supportive capacity to their Changing relatives. Some Kinfolk know what they are from the get-go; some discover their heritage as the answer to the mystery that their family has known and only just now passed on to them; some never know, and never understand why life has a way of crashing in on them with dreaded regularity.

Not all Kinfolk families know what separates them from the rest of humanity, what makes their lives different from others of their same social class, economic level, ethnic group, or geographic location. The ones that do, call themselves Kinfolk, as do the Garou who know of them or claim them as family. The Garou also refer to these knowledgeable humans as “kenning” Kinfolk, or “kenners.” The ones who don’t

know, don't call themselves anything other than human — unless they use the word “cursed,” or “afflicted,” or even “blessed,” or just “lucky.” Garou call them “callow.”

Kenning Kinfolk

Most Kinfolk fall into the category of kenning Kinfolk. The extent of knowledge in these families differs greatly, from those who only know that they have werewolves in the family, to the ones who can recite genealogical history, discern one tribe from another, and sometimes serve as information sources for Garou looking for obscure points of lore. Most kenning families fall somewhere in the middle: they know about the Garou, that they have one or more family members who are Garou (and that future generations of their family might undergo the First Change), and that they have a duty to support their Garou family members.

The amount of support a kenning family owes to their Garou differs from family to family, from Garou to Garou, and from tribe to tribe. Some kenning Kinfolk only see their Garou relatives when their help is needed. They stand ready to provide shelter, access to medical aid, food, and other material necessities whenever their Garou brother or aunt shows up wounded, hunted, or otherwise in need. The rest of the time, they live relatively normal lives.

Other Kinfolk families spend most of their time preparing for the day the Garou might call upon them. They bring up their children with a focus on the ways they might serve their Garou family member. They remain on call all the time, maintain an inventory of things the Garou might need, and excise from their lives anything not connected in some fashion with their Garou relatives.

Garou differ greatly from tribe to tribe, depending on their places of origin, physical characteristics, and mindset. These differences appear as well in their Kinfolk. Still, even though they may be very different from one another in ways that mirror the differences of their Garou relations, Kinfolk from different tribes have more in common with one another than they do with “normal” humans.

The Kinfolk Examined

Most kenning Kinfolk (a discussion of callow Kinfolk follows, p. 35) share a common personality profile. They exhibit similar personality traits, mindsets, and temperaments. This is not to say that Kinfolk all come in cookie-cutter patterns. They are as individual as any non-Kinfolk humans in the details of their lives, but they fall into broad general characteristics that reflect many generations of family connections with the Garou.

Mindset

Kenning Kinfolk grow up with the knowledge that they carry the Garou “gene” (or Garou blood) in their biological

make-up. They also know that because they missed out on the particulars that lead a Garou to her First Change, they rate second in anything involving Garou. Many of them keenly feel that they are “second-class” citizens of the Garou Nation. The Garou, themselves, bolster that impression all too often by their tendencies to act with either condescension or arrogance toward their human family.

Many Garou expect service from their Kinfolk, often above and beyond otherwise normal expectations. When a Garou comes to his Kinfolk family needing healing, rest, supplies, or even a place to hide temporarily, they usually expect their relations to meet those needs immediately and without hesitation. They rarely take into account the fact that their appearance may interfere with the family's normal schedule. Piano recitals and soccer games, board meetings, factory work schedules, and even surgical operations must come to a crashing halt to meet the needs of the Garou.

Many Kinfolk accept this and make accommodations for this sort of occurrence; others solve the problem by never becoming involved in things that they may have to interrupt when Uncle Sings-of-Gaia's-Battles shows up with yet another request (i.e. command) for assistance. Some families forbid their children to participate in extracurricular activities, attend proms, or make plans for the future that can't undergo change in an instant. While some young Kinfolk eventually reconcile themselves to their social and vocational limitations, others only grow more and more resentful, sometimes to the point of open rebellion.

Other Kinfolk families find a happy medium; between having a family life of their own and allowing their children enough independence in planning their futures to balance their own needs with those of the Garou in their lives. Some Garou tribes, such as the Children of Gaia, demand less of their Kinfolk in terms of subservience. Others, such as the Bone Gnawers, go out of their way to include Kinfolk in as many of their activities as possible without causing them injury. Still others, such as the Shadow Lords, often insist on a superior-to-inferior relationship.

Many Kinfolk grow up feeling inferior to, or jealous of, the Garou. In combination with some degree of resentment that Gaia did not choose them to manifest the Garou “gene,” these individuals also harbor a heavy dose of envy. This causes them to react in different ways.

Some go out of their way to prove they can hold their own alongside (or against) their Garou relations. They work out, undergo strenuous strength-training regimens, and often resort to biochemical enhancements, such as steroids. Others resort to subtly subverting their relative's needs: providing them food that is nutritious and plentiful, but badly cooked; supplying them with second-rate (though not sub-standard) equipment; nursing them to health with something less than TLC (without seeming to do so). A few go to extremes,

seeking those who might help them fulfill their dreams of becoming Garou. (See Chapter Four: Storytelling Kinfolk Chronicles, for more on the Skin Dancers.)

Customs

Regardless of the differences from one Kinfolk family to another, or among Kinfolk of different tribes, all Kinfolk share a few common traits or customs that enable them to deal with family members who live in a permanent state of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). These are a few customs that enable harmonious relations to exist among Kinfolk and Garou in most circumstances.

Acquiescence: From a very young age, kenning Kinfolk learn that when their Garou relatives speak, they had better respond with compliance. “Don’t let Uncle Jimmy get angry with you,” is a warning that most young Kin take very seriously. Even older Kinfolk, including normal heads of families, walk carefully around their Garou family no matter how deep their bonds of affection.

Nurturance: Most Garou visit their Kinfolk (unless they live with them) only in times of need or in order to breed. Kinfolk recognize this and take pride in their ability to soothe their Garou relatives, whether through food, comfort, sexual attention, or simply providing a quiet, restful environment.

Pride of Place: When a Garou relative visits, she receives the lion’s share of whatever she wants: food, drink, the best chair in the house, the best bed, or bedroom, etc. Unless the Garou indicates otherwise, she eats first, speaks first, and acts first, as if she were pack leader to her Kinfolk (and, in fact, she is).

Respect: Many Garou believe in their superiority over their Kinfolk. As members of a species with a strict hierarchy system in their own tribes and packs, Garou naturally expect some of the same treatment from their Kinfolk. Unless they are very familiar with and fond of one another, a Kinfolk will usually address their relative with a “sir,” or “ma’am,” or some other term of respect (not unlike those used in some military families). While a Kinfolk may voice disagreement with a Garou relative, she usually takes great care to do so in a tactful and respectful manner, never pushing her ideas or opinions once the Garou has made a decision.

Submission: Inevitably, a member of a Garou’s human family will do something that brings the Garou’s Rage to the fore. A battle between Garou and Kinfolk can only end in the death or permanent maiming of the Kinfolk, however ably the human might defend himself. If a Kinfolk becomes the target of a Garou relative’s attack, he learns to submit immediately, either through backing away, or, in extreme cases, by exposing his throat or belly to the Garou attacker. This submissive posture usually cuts through a Garou’s Rage by invoking the portion of the Litany that demands a Garou accept an “honorable surrender.”

Hierarchy

Some Kinfolk families have an internal hierarchy that mimics that of a Garou pack. In most cases (and not unlike many traditional “nuclear” human families), the father or eldest male is head of the family and receives the same kind of respect as a Garou elder. The father’s mate, unless Garou, acts as the primary support for the Kinfolk “elder” or acts as leader in his absence. Whenever a Garou is present, of course, the Garou takes over as elder (regardless of his actual Garou rank). If a family runs along matriarchal lines, the mother or eldest female acts as the elder. In other families, the oldest family member, regardless of gender, acts as elder.

Black Fury Kinfolk tend to have a matriarchal structure to their families, while a patriarchal hierarchy most often exists among the Get of Fenris, Silver Fang, and Fianna. Among the Shadow Lords and Glass Walkers, merit singles out the elder Kinfolk, with the other members falling into place according to their usefulness to the family. Children of Gaia, Stargazers, and Silent Striders usually have a looser family structure, giving precedence to Garou relatives but with minimal structure beyond that. Bone Gnawers either have no hierarchy or they have a matriarch or patriarch that has final say over most family matters. Uktena and Wendigo tend to pattern themselves after their human tribal customs whenever possible. Among Red Talon Kinfolk, hierarchy follows the normal structure of a wolf pack. Children are almost always the lowest in the hierarchy, having the most to learn and needing the most protection.

Subaltern Packs (Kinfolk Packs)

Just as Garou form packs of bonded individuals to better serve Gaia, the idea of Kinfolk packs, sometimes called subaltern or plebe packs, has grown exponentially among Kinfolk. Usually, these packs consist of Kinfolk in their late teens and older, though young Kinfolk sometimes form “play packs.”

Forming a permanent or even a temporary group of Kinfolk to tackle field missions enables Kinfolk the chance to fight some of Gaia’s enemies with a good chance of survival. Taking as their models the Garou pack, the military’s special ops small-tactical groups, and even the adventure gaming model from online games, most Kinfolk packs contain from four to six members. One person takes on the job of pack leader, another acts as “medic” or healer (usually someone with medical knowledge or supernatural healing), another as scout or point person, and the rest as “muscle.”

While many Kinfolk packs come and go as necessity dictates, a few packs have managed to stay together and have made a name for themselves among Kinfolk. A few of these packs appear below.

- # (Hashtag): Made up of Glass Walker Kinfolk with impressive computer skills, this pack excels in conducting computer ops that cause major headaches for Pentex and various

other Wyrms-affiliated corporations. Occasionally, they take to the field for some on-site sabotage, but their chief business consists of monitoring the Internet for useful information or for early warnings that the Wyrms is on the move. Headed by Yvonne Masters, a 32-year-old software designer with her own business, # holds regular meetings to hone one another's skills and keep track of their progress on long-term projects. Other pack members include Logan Firth, 22-year-old security consultant/hacker, whose expertise in placing or erasing viruses has already brought a couple of environment-wrecking companies to the point of bankruptcy; Fawkes, 26-year-old video game tester who builds his own processors; Morna Dawes, 23-year-old blogger and device wizard; and Alvin Geauchard, online investor, self-made millionaire, and the author of "How to Write Yourself Into History," a how-to book on using the Internet and social media to spin your own reality. They pride themselves on doing damage to the enemy without having to leave their homes. Working together has made them that much more effective.

- **The Killers:** This not-so-subtly named Kinfolk pack consists primarily of Get of Fenris and Silent Strider Kinfolk who specialize in knock-down, drag-out fights with the tribe's enemies or targets assigned to them by their Garou kin. Gunther Kraler, 30-year-old army veteran and professional hunter, leads the pack with a loose military style. Attention to the pack hierarchy is important, but discipline is generally comfortably loose. Pack medic is Anna Glimm, 28-year-old triage nurse, the only female, and usually the only non-combatant in the pack. Silent Strider Kinfolk Macabee Concannon, 26-year-old, acts as scout when he is in town. Otherwise Stefan Lunz, 30-year-old wilderness guide, takes the job. Another part-time pack member, Silent Strider Kin Jacobi Al Yusef, serves as small-arms coordinator when his travels enable him to join in a pack operation. Twins Mark and Mikal von Zurgan, 20-year-old athletes and gun enthusiasts fill out the pack's muscle. All members know how to use multiple weapons, including artillery and grenades, and are trained in at least one combat or martial arts style. Their Garou kin supply them with a list of potential targets they want removed or "neutralized" and leave it to the Killers to plan and execute their own ops. So far they have always succeeded and have not been caught.

- **Nightshade:** This pack of Black Fury Kinfolk consists of Rebecca Pacoulis, 27-year-old leader and the daughter of a Theurge; Melika Ash, 22-year-old EMT and herbal healer; Alexander Likoiros, 18-year-old extreme sports enthusiast and pack point man; Rico Karakis, 23-year-old Olympic-style wrestler; Pola Mistrunner, 25-year-old gym teacher; and Themis Oeris, 19-year-old college student and amateur archer. The pack has been together for a little over a year and its members have distinguished themselves as useful in taking out human operatives of Wyrms-controlled companies, usually attacking simultaneously with a Black Fury Garou assault on the main target. This pack provides an outlet for male Fury Kinfolk who get tired of taking a back seat in this matriarchal society.

Marriages to Garou

For many (actually, for most) Garou, Kinfolk exist primarily as breeding stock. Whatever else they might be or become, Kinfolk must, wherever possible, provide male and female Garou with mates. While this may sound crass or demeaning to most people, Garou recognize that Gaia, in her wisdom, has forbidden Garou to mate with Garou. If Gaia's Warriors are to continue to fight her battles, then they must find mates among their human or wolf Kin. While this may seem to relegate Kinfolk to the role of breeders, in actuality, bringing forth the next generation of Garou to take on the formidable job of combatting the Wyrms in all its many forms rates as one of the highest forms of service one can give to Gaia.

Family ties are among the strongest ones within the animal world, particularly among wolf packs. The importance of those ties resonates among the Garou, who cherish their young and, usually, their mates with a fierceness that sometimes goes beyond the bounds of protectiveness.

In many cases, Garou mate with Kinfolk for life, just as wolves do. Occasionally, some Garou may choose many mates, particularly when Garou children do not seem forthcoming with their current partner. Some tribes, such as the Silent Striders, find their nomadic lifestyle leads to less permanent relationships with either human or wolf partners. Others, such as the Black Furies, have complex relationships that allow for more than one male Kinfolk partner at a time. For them, the importance lies in the ability to produce female Garou.

Love and Marriage

Marriages among Garou and Kinfolk more often than not have a basis in romantic love and physical attraction. Garou passions run high, and so do those of their Kinfolk. Many unions begin with sheer "animal" magnetism, with little thought beyond the joy that both partners share in their physical union. Resulting marriages have a success rate not unlike those of normal humans. Some partners remain in love with each other until the death of one of them severs the bond. Others discover that the initial attraction soon fades, and the reality of a permanent union frays and breaks down. Even so, just as some human families do for religious or societal pressures, many Garou and their mates tough it out for the sake of keeping the family together, particularly when the union proves a good one for the creation of Garou children.

Arranged Marriages

Other Garou unions resemble political ties or business contracts, not unlike those that occur among human royalty or among the economic upper crust. Many countries still practice arranged marriages, and this pattern also exists among Garou. While some tribes, notably the Children of Gaia, Bone Gnawers, Fianna, Glass Walkers, and Silent Striders encourage ties of affection or incidental pairings, others keep careful track of their Kinfolks' breeding potential.

NEW BLOOD: KIN AND NON-KIN MATING

Garou prefer that their Kinfolk marry and breed with other Kinfolk. This guarantees that their children will also be Kinfolk. It also makes it easier to keep the secrets of the Garou in the family. But as the Bard said, “the course of true love never did run smooth.” Kinfolk sometimes fall in love (or lust) with non-Kinfolk, resulting in marriages, relationships, or even one-night stands with someone not “of the blood.” Their children might be Kinfolk... or they might not be. (See “Begettings,” in the Introduction, pp. 8-9.)

Garou argue about the odds of such unions producing Kin (let alone Garou), with some favoring pure bloodlines to ensure higher probabilities, and others preferring to let diverse lines mix, believing that only Gaia controls the results.

Kinfolk are well aware that they’ve got to open up their families at times to let in new blood. Inbreeding can produce unhealthy children, unfit for the First Change or for continuing the bloodline. For many Garou tribes, this has traditionally meant planning for arranged marriages or at least social meet-ups between kenneing Kin from different septs. These matches were once mostly between Kin of the same tribe from different regions, with some cross-tribal blood being accepted now and then, mainly out of necessity. In modern times, as the ranks thin and tribes gather together into multi-tribal septs, there is an increasing awareness that Kinfolk should seek new blood outside the circle of Garou. That is, when no Garou mate is available, and every Kin candidate is

too closely related (or is otherwise unappealing), Kin are encouraged to find mates out in the world, away from the confines of the septs, even though this means mixing with non-Kinfolk. Baring the lucky find of a callow Kin as a mate, modern dating and breeding means that some children will not be Kin.

This brings with it a new concern: whether to raise non-Kin children as kenneing or callow. It might be a mercy to keep the truth of their family’s Garou heritage from them, since they cannot easily participate in the family business (not being able to tolerate witnessing Crinos form). Since these non-Kinfolks’ own children will also not be Kinfolk (unless they mate with a Kinfolk, giving their child a chance to be a Kinfolk), many sept elders consider it best to sever the connections with these lesser cousins, to let them go their own way, never knowing the truth about one of their eccentric parents. Other septs, however, feel they need every ally they can get, and raise these non-Kinfolk with full participation in and knowledge of the burden their family bears.

Although matings between wolf Kin and non-Kin wolves have always been common, the widespread practice of human Kin and human non-Kin mating is such a relatively recent phenomenon that there are few guidelines based on tribal cultures. The practice varies from sept to sept, based largely on modern conditions and needs. The Silver Fangs, of course, are an exception, continuing to hold out for purity in their Kinfolks’ matings.

PURE BREED: BEHIND THE SCENES

Silver Fangs, more than any other tribe, exhibit an obsessive interest in bloodlines. Most of their Kinfolk possess the Pure Breed Background, and the Silver Fang make certain that the purity of their lineage does not diminish due to such paltry reasons as love or physical attraction. Soon after a female Silver Fang Kin delivers a child, a member of the tribe (sometimes the Garou parent) shows up to “verify” the purity of the birth. The Silver Fang contacts an ancestor spirit using a tribal ritual to determine the true father of the child. Coupled with often rigorous interrogation of the mother and close relatives, the tribe can ferret out any stray infidelity that might lead to a dilution of the blood. When the child receives approval by the tribe, he receives his Fetch (see

pp. 99-104) along with a welcome to the tribe. Even if he never undergoes his First Change, he becomes an important contributor to the tribe (and goes on the list of approved carriers of the blood).

If a child proves to be the result of a match between a Silver Fang Kin and anyone else (including a Garou of another tribe), the interrogators remove the child from his mother and “relocate him.” The official story holds that the child enters an approved foster home and becomes “adopted” by a less particular tribe (i.e., the Bone Gnawers, Children of Gaia, or even Silent Striders).

Most Garou and Kinfolk prefer to believe the official story.



The Silver Fangs have the strongest reputation as sticklers for Pure Breeds, making certain that their Kinfolk mate with Garou or other Silver Fang Kinfolk. Sometimes these matings result from arranged marriages; at other times they come from *ad hoc* pairings that do not necessarily result in long-term relationships. The need to conceive a child serves as the imperative to which all else takes second place. The Silver Fang keep at least one registry (see the Silvertree Genealogical Society below) to ensure the perpetuation of the blood.

Likewise, the Get of Fenris have strong preferences toward the lineage of those they claim as Kinfolk. For the most part, they prefer Kinfolk of Nordic or Teutonic stock, believing that their warrior traditions, strong patriarchal tendencies, and cultural ethos provide the best nature-nurture environment for the Get's Garou-to-be.

On rare occasions, usually ones in which a non-Get Kinfolk brings herself to the attention of a Get of Fenris pack through an act of distinction, that pack may reward the individual with the right to call herself Get of Fenris Kin. Usually this happens in the case of romantic involvements between a Fenris Garou and someone outside the circle of Kinfolk and resembles the old fairy tales in which a worthy commoner undergoes a test of strength and character to win his beloved in marriage.

Mostly, Get of Fenris Kinfolk keep their children close enough so that they end up in approved relationships, either with other Get Kin or with a pre-selected Garou.

Shadow Lords care as much, if not more, about the mating choices of their Kin, but for their own reasons. Foremost in the minds of the Shadow Lord Garou stands the question: "How best can a mating advance the power and influence of the tribe?" Closely followed by: "How can I best benefit from selecting a politically, socially, or economically influential mate?" Marriages or relationships outside the Shadow Lord fold may win approval by the tribe provided they pass careful scrutiny that involves bank accounts, investments, and sometimes not-quite-legitimate activities. The bottom line: what's good for the tribe is the only thing that matters.

The Red Talons, since they have no human Kinfolk, don't seem to worry overmuch about "marriages." Wolves tend to mate for life, and Red Talons retain so much of their wolf nature that the conceiving, bearing, and raising of children by wolf-Kin does not present a problem. As for the occasional Red Talon who may enjoy a tumble with a human or wolf Kinfolk from another tribe, only rumors exist to suggest that such an event ever happens. Some Black Fury, Bone Gnawer, Uktena, Children of Gaia, and Silent Strider Kin claim that they have met and even borne children by one or another rogue Red Talon, but no confirmation has ever come from the Talons — nor ever will. Undoubtedly any Red Talon caught consorting with human Kinfolk ends up facing tribal retribution resulting in loss of Honor and/or Wisdom Renown at best, actual rank loss even worse, and banishment for incorrigibles (repeat offenders).

LE DROIT DU SEIGNEUR: THE LORD'S RIGHT

Also referred to as *jus prima noctis* (the right of the first night), *le droit de jambage* (the right of the leg), or *le droit de cuissage* (the right of the thigh), *le droit du seigneur* refers to the custom dating back at least as far as the Middle Ages, if not before, in which the lord of a realm had the right to the wedding night of any of the subordinate women, noble or peasant, if he desired. Though not a confirmed fact, enough references to the practice exist to presume that high-born men, particularly in a society that valued women only as commodities or vessels for breeding, did exercise this prerogative. Garou of the time period did not differ overmuch from their human counterparts, and many modern Garou (more than they might like to admit) look back with some nostalgia on the days when Kinfolk “knew their place.”

Medieval society, with its strict hierarchical structure, made it easier for the Garou to keep track of their Kinfolk and make sure that they always had enough quality breeding stock to perpetuate their tribes. Throwbacks to those older ways of thinking occur now and again in tribes with closer ties to their cultural history: Silver Fangs, Get of Fenris, Fianna, Shadow Lords, and even Wendigo.

Even today, some circumstances allow or even seem to encourage a Garou to “claim” Kinfolk women as mates, even (or especially) on their wedding nights. Subcultures such as biker gangs, insular communities in which close kin often produce children, religious or social cults, gangs, or criminal families may consider this practice an accepted part of their lifestyle — and Garou packs crop up in all of these circumstances. Is this some Garou pack’s answer to inbreeding or stacking the genetic cards? Perhaps. Is this rape? If the female is unwilling, yes!

Storytellers should be careful about including such circumstances in their Garou or Kinfolk chronicles. Players must be ready and willing to confront morally ambiguous (or just plain morally wrong-headed) actions, and perhaps rescue one of their Kinfolk, or change a long-standing pack policy.

Another tribe that pays close attention to the breeding practices of their Kinfolk are the Wendigo. These Garou tend to try to preserve the Native American Garou from the contamination of mating with the Wyrmbriinger tribes from Europe. While individual Wendigo may decide differently and follow their hearts, the tribe as a whole looks askance at such marriages or relationships and reacts with censure or requires some sort of ritual purification before accepting the errant Wendigo back into the tribe or reluctantly acknowledging her choice of mate.

In general, all Garou try to make use of their Kinfolk in ways that strengthen the tribe, and none of the tribes hold themselves above dictating who should marry whom when the future of Gaia is at stake.

Tribal Customs

Each Garou tribe has its own view or views on Kinfolk, their purpose, their care and keeping, and their attitude toward these humans (or wolves) who ensure that the Garou species survives. As the number of Garou dwindle, Garou-Kinfolk relationships sometimes find themselves pushed to the limit, exerting great amounts of stress on both sides.

Some tribes and their Kinfolk experience this more keenly than others. A few claim that they have no problems with their Kinfolk. In most cases, they are lying or delusional.

Kinfolk of the Thirteen Tribes

Black Furies

The Black Furies’ overarching concern for women and children in the clutches of a patriarchal or male-dominated society brings them close to their Kinfolk, both male and female. Many female Kinfolk associate themselves with Black Fury circles.

In Europe, and the Old World, the Sisterhood works to deliver Kinfolk and their children to places of safety. In the modern world, where genetic cleansing has resurfaced, Garou and Kinfolk of the Sisterhood have rescued women and children in Eastern Europe and in the new countries of the former Soviet Union, not to mention places in Africa and the Middle East. Male Kinfolk find a welcome place in the Sisterhood. In many countries where this group of Black Furies fight for freedom and equal rights, male Kinfolk can go places and secure advantages not allowed to women. These brave men recognize their jobs as important, but in no way superior to the job that Kinfolk and Garou women do.

Many Kinfolk associated with the Sisterhood (see p. 29) have learned hedge magic (see *Numina*, in Chapter Three). Known as *strega* among the locals, they have a reputation

as wise women and healers, another factor that brings down negative attention from the regional patriarchies. Sisterhood Kin also train in combat fighting and martial arts skills, sometimes more than their Garou kin, who rely on natural weapons and strength as often as they do with other modes of fighting.

Where the Sisterhood provides welcome and safety for Kinfolk in Europe and other parts of the world, the Moon-Daughters, born from America's flirtation with the New Age, serve the same purpose in the Western Hemisphere. Working with the Children of Gaia, the Furies of the Moon-Daughters more often seek peaceful solutions, though their warrior spirit never stays entirely quiet. They embrace pagans, holistics, New Agers of all kinds, and even Christians who agree with their egalitarian, peaceful practices. Moon-Daughters often practice ritual magic, keep wolf-Kin as close companions, and consider male Kinfolk (and some male non-Kin) as equal or nearly so.

Unlike many tribes, who place procreation above all other purposes for Kinfolk, Black Fury Kin acknowledge their duty to provide for the next generation of Black Furies, but also realize the importance of providing safety for all women and children. They have few problems with gay or alternate lifestyles, and some Black Fury groups seem to prefer same-sex companionships for everything except producing children. Black Fury Kinfolk often choose to have male children, particularly those who show signs of becoming Garou, adopted into other tribes; in like manner, Black Fury Kinfolk willingly adopt girl children from tribes who prefer male scions, such as the Get of Fenris and some Shadow Lords.

Bone Gnawers

Unlike most other Garou, the Bone Gnawers do not suffer from a tendency to condescend to or underestimate their Kinfolk. Circumstances and history have conspired to place these Children of Rat on the low end of Garou society – just about on the level of Kinfolk. Some say that one day a Bone Gnawer Galliard woke up in a hut filled with Kinfolk, who were all passing the time telling stories about themselves and their past deeds. As the night wore on, each story grew longer, the intricacies more detailed, and the events more fantastic. The Bone Gnawer listened to stories of enemies vanquished, innocents rescued, and the downtrodden given champions to defend them. Finally, his turn came to tell a tale. He tried to think of something he had done that stood out from among the others. At last he stood up in their midst and said, "I can do this." He changed into his fiercest form and looked around. One or two of the Kinfolk looked amazed for a moment. Then they all applauded, and one of them offered him a drink from a freshly unstoppered clay jug. "Looks like you're one of us," the giver said. The Bone Gnawer resumed his human

form to better partake of the refreshment, realizing that it didn't matter who was who. They were all Bone Gnawers. All one of "us." In fact, many Bone Gnawers realize that their Kinfolk often bear their thankless, trouble-filled lives with more courage and with many fewer advantages than the Bone Gnawers do. From that day, as the Galliard's story spread, Bone Gnawers looked at their Kinfolk with much more respect. Or so the story goes. Other stories say it was always that way.

Bone Gnawers hold their Kinfolk in high regard, or as highly as anyone with little regard for society's trappings can. They understand that they and their Kin need to work together to achieve whatever Gaia wants from them. Kinfolk associated with the Bone Gnawer's Rat Fink camp often occupy society's lower rungs, holding down (or trying to) jobs as janitors, fast-food slingers, garbage collectors, file clerks, and other thankless jobs that support the necessary but unglamorous bottom-of-the-ladder to success. Along with their Garou kin, they traffic in information, and are generally in a good position to acquire odd facts.

Both human and wolf Bone Gnawer Kin know of the Barking Chain, which uses coded yelps, howls, and barks to relay information from place to place, whether within a city, between cities, or from city to rural Gnawers. Although human Kin can't replicate the complex sounds used in this form of communication unless they possess the Chain Talk Gift (see p. 67), they know that any information passed along to lupus Kin will travel along the Chain to its desired end.

Kinfolk who run with the Bone Gnawer's "Hood" share their Garou relations' desire to create a more equitable society by redistributing as much of the wealth as possible. These Kinfolk range from petty thieves who have stumbled upon a "noble cause" upon which to hang their shady deeds, to *pro-bono* lawyers (not all of whom practice legally), and ex-social workers who realize that they can help more people outside than inside the system.

In many cities, Bone Gnawer Kinfolk find their way into jobs with local animal control. This allows them to locate Garou taken by surprise by their First Change; reports of "wild dogs" enable them to find and rescue these Garou, regardless of their tribe, and get them to safety before they end up in the back of an animal control van. Kinfolk also spearhead the drive for no-kill solutions to stray animals and lead the fight against dog- and cock-fighting rings.

Road Warders' Kin share the wanderlust of the Garou who make up this camp. Usually they have one prize possession, a van used for hauling their latest group of "family," including Garou, down backroads and superhighways, or sometimes a motorcycle, for those who would rather travel closer to the ground. Some continue the hobo tradition; others wander only when the urge takes them, or when the jobs run out, or when they get caught.

The Kinfolk associated with the Bone Gnawers' Hillfolk camp fulfill every stereotype conjured up by the word "hill-billy" – but only sometimes. For every ignorant, backward, illiterate, inbred mountain man and his barefoot family, there is an herbalist with a PhD in folklore and herbal healing, a diligent hill farmer whose home-schooled children are just as likely to attend university as they are to stay at home and add another room or two to the family homestead. Many of these Kinfolk turn their backs on technology; others boast of their satellite dishes and monitor their police radios religiously to keep up with the latest news. And, of course, they (Kinfolk and Garou) brew up the most righteous moonshine in the hollows of Appalachia, the Ozarks, and other mountainous regions. They are also more likely than most Kinfolk to involve themselves in family feuds that last for generations.

Children of Gaia

Of all the Garou, the Children of Gaia probably hold their Kinfolk in the highest esteem. Recognizing the importance of the role that Kinfolk play in the perpetuation of the species, the Garou accord Kinfolk equal status where possible, and near-equal in matters where Garou must take the lead.

The residual stigma of one of their Kinfolk, Samuel Haight, whose notorious hatred of his inferior status led him to the discovery of "skinchanging" and to the subsequent formation of the outlawed Skin Dancers, has branded the necessity of doing right by their Kin deep into the tribal consciousness. No one wants a repeat performance, with perhaps even more insidious consequences next time around.

Like their Garou kin, Children of Gaia Kinfolk focus heavily on community involvement, particularly concentrating on environmental issues, social inequities, and relief efforts. Among the first responders after hurricane, tsunami, and earthquake disasters, Children of Gaia and their Kinfolk worked side by side in volunteer rescue efforts, as well as post-disaster relief for both humans and animals. From national and international organizations such as the Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, animal protection groups, wildlife preservation societies, and environmental conservation action programs, to local volunteer firefighters' groups, benevolent societies, and grassroots self-help and protection groups, Children of Gaia Kin work toward the greatest good for the greatest number. Lupine Kin often act as caern guards and bawn sentinels, sharing in the life of the tribe as fully as possible.

Whenever possible, Garou Children attempt to include their Kinfolk in moots (at least in the parts where they may participate) and rites. Although they do not have "voting" rights when it comes to making decisions for septs, the wishes and ideas of Kinfolk receive consideration.

Sometimes equality between Garou and Kinfolk can prove more than a Kinfolk can bear. Now and then, Garou

expect too much of their Kin, particularly in combat situations. At times the physical shortcomings of Kinfolk have disastrous results and serve as grim reminders that equality of intent does not always result in equality in fact.

Fianna

For the Fianna, family encompasses so much more than blood relations. The Garou of Celtic human stock incorporate ideas of clan pride, fighting fellowships, and the joy of living and dying into their daily life. Kenning Kinfolk grow up knowing their connection not only to their Garou family but to a cultural tradition as well. Some Kin become caught up in the political and social struggles associated with their Celtic backgrounds.

The Irish and Scottish Fianna Kin sometimes find themselves embroiled in political activities that periodically erupt in violence. In the U.S., Fianna Kinfolk often participate in the close-knit activities of Irish or Scots-Irish Americans, attending meetings in Hibernian societies or participating in Highland celebrations. They sometimes adopt ethnic attitudes based on outdated and backward prejudices that date from a time when being Irish was unpopular, or when Americans of Irish and Scottish descent seldom got along. Many Kinfolk need reminding from time to time that racial and ethnic tensions, religions and political differences do not belong in their world (or in any world), and that being Fianna takes precedence to everything else.

While Fianna Kinfolk share with their Garou kin on an almost equal basis, the differences between Gaia's warriors and their human support network loom large when it comes to battling the Wyrms and its minions. Kinfolk share in much of the life of the caern, with trusted families living within the bawn and carrying out duties connected with securing the caern's surroundings. Feasts and celebrations include Kinfolk, and most Fianna septs uphold a tradition of the feast before battle. These occasions also provide an opportunity for Kin and Garou to choose partners, whether for a night or for a longer-term relationship.

Relations between Fianna Kin and Garou are far from promiscuous. Rather, they aim for an attitude that embraces the need for love in the face of impending death and the overwhelming belief that joy, however transcendent, overcomes the greatest of sorrows. Ingrained into the life of both Fianna Garou and their families is the attitude that life is precious and fleeting, joy should never wait for the "right time," and family ties endure forever.

Competitions play a part in many get-togethers among Fianna Kinfolk and Garou. Sometimes Kin and Garou compete on an even basis with dancing and drinking contests. (It's not sporting to cheat by using the Resist Toxin Gift.) Physical competitions generally separate Kinfolk from Garou, acknowledging the obvious differences in capabilities.

Many Fianna Kinfolk follow occupations that reflect

their cultural upbringing, as well as their penchant for work that tests their physical limits, such as police officers, firefighters, emergency responders, coaches or fitness instructors. Others become doctors, teachers, or artisans of various types. Not a few enter the hospitality field, excelling as brewers and caterers.

Some Kinfolk, particularly those whose families have learned to reconcile their Garou blood with traditional religious practices, enter the religious life as priests or nuns, if Catholic, and as ministers, if Protestant. Fianna Garou often have problems with Kinfolk desiring to enter vocations that require celibacy, since this removes them from the desperately needed breeding pool. While Fianna do not expressly forbid Kinfolk from making such decisions, they do insist that their Kinfolk have very good reasons for wanting to do so. In cases like this, the alleged equality of relations between Garou and Kinfolk undergo their most severe tests.

Get of Fenris

While the Get of Fenris have a well-deserved reputation as fierce warriors, implacable foes, and often harsh advocates for Garou superiority, they represent something very different to their Kinfolk. The passion, loyalty, and devotion the Get have for their Kinfolk, and their protectiveness toward them, rivals their commitment to Gaia's safety. Their Kinfolk know this, and have learned to accommodate the sometimes overweening authoritarianism of their Garou parents, sons, daughters, lovers, and other relations.

In general, Kinfolk do not question the decisions made by their Garou kin, even if it regards decisions that have to do with their own life choices. More often than not, however, a woman married to one of the Get will discuss with her mate whether or not she wants to get a job outside the home, pursue an advanced degree, or run for public office. In a similar fashion, a male Kinfolk married to a Get listens carefully to her opinions on what actions he should take to best fulfill his role as protector of their human family.

Although a distinction between the sexes once played a firm role within the tribe and between the Get and their Kinfolk, the lines between gender-appropriate activities has blurred as women have become more outspoken, and mainstream society comes closer and closer to blanket equality. Many Kinfolk still raise their children in the old ways, with strict roles for girls and boys. Other Kinfolk families pay more attention to where an individual's strengths lie and try to nurture the actual talents of their children.

Get Kinfolk in the outside world tend toward careers that have tangible measures of success. Many men, and some women, aim for professions that give them authority and allow them to exercise their preference for taking control of a situation; many enjoy the discipline and challenge of attaining a medical or law degree and enter those fields with an eye toward eventually helping their tribe. Others look to

military training to give them the ability to fight alongside their Garou kin if needed. Frequently, female Kinfolk seek out the military as a way of impressing on their male Kinfolk as well as their Garou relations their fitness to do battle for Gaia. Female Kin also take on vocations that allow them to serve as role models for the next generation of girls, whether Kinfolk or not, by teaching self-defense, sports, and other activities meant to bolster confidence and bring out leadership qualities.

Some Kinfolk band together to hunt down creatures such as vampires and destructive ghosts, while simultaneously protecting the werewolves under their roofs.

While the stereotypes of Fenris Garou ruling their Kinfolk with an iron hand may continue to exist, the truth of the matter is that the stereotype is becoming the exception.

Glass Walkers

Glass Walker Kinfolk occupy an unenviable spot compared to most other Kinfolk. On the one hand, Glass Walkers value their Kinfolk highly and, consequently, expect a lot from them. On the other hand, the Walkers themselves fulfill most of the functions usually filled by Kinfolk of other tribes. As financiers and businesspersons, they raise ample funding for the tribe. They're also able to perform urban-based activities such as purchasing equipment and food for caerns or septs, and forming contacts with local authorities as well as the criminal underworld. Since the Garou take over these aspects of tribal survival, the major portion of Kinfolk jobs are serving as breeding stock and taking on jobs that require them to travel far from the sept. Throughout their history, female Glass Walker Kinfolk have had a harder time finding a place in tribal society than their male counterparts. Some, in fact, joined human institutions such as the Church, where, as nuns, they could exercise indirect influence to keep their Garou kin out of trouble. This, however, removed them from the breeding pool, so female Kinfolk often had to overcome a lot of opposition if they wanted to take this path.

Male Kinfolk were only slightly better off. The Garou often found uses for their male Kinfolk by sending them as spies into the territories of other tribes or Wyrmsuspected agencies. This resulted in taking these Kinfolk away from their families for long periods of time, often fostering less-than-perfect relations between Garou and their Kin.

Despite the disadvantages many Glass Walker Kinfolk experience, they do enjoy the protection of the tribe. Many septs require their Kin to live within the caern, usually in separate quarters, in order to protect them. This applies most often to pregnant females and children.

Access to sophisticated arms and various weaponry, combat armor, and other protections enable Glass Walkers to outfit their Kinfolk well enough to join them in combat. The Garou do not expect their Kin to battle the Wyrms's

supernatural allies, but they do find Kinfolk extremely helpful in combatting the Wyrms' human servants and some weaker fomori. With certain Gifts and at least one special rite, Glass Walker Kin can temporarily work together with Garou as a pack, availing themselves of the benefits of the pack totem as if they were Garou.

Red Talons

Red Talon Kinfolk are wolves, and only wolves. Nevertheless, the distinction between Kinfolk and Garou that exists with other tribes and their homid Kin still comes into play. Garou do consider themselves superior in many ways to their wolf-Kin. They have Gaia's mandate to fight for her; their Kin only know survival. Their "human mind," which enables them to take on Homid form and walk among humans, gives them the ability to think ahead, to plan, and to take precautions. This means they know how to protect their birth-pack, with whom they generally form close ties and from whom they will probably choose a mate.

Wolf-Kin automatically recognize pack leaders, though they do not attach the word "alpha" (or any word) to them. These Kinfolk follow their Garou relative's instructions, communicated through vocal sounds and body language. They know when to hunt and when to stay behind while their Garou kin leaves for other business. Red Talon Kinfolk do not display the same resentment at their relegation to an inferior place. Their instincts tell them to accept their place in wolf society. Since Garou live longer than either humans or wolves, one Red Talon may, in fact, preside over multiple generations of wolves within the pack. Wolves attain maturity within two years; this means that wolf cubs soon learn the proper behavior around their Red Talon leader, innately learning the submission of pack member to leader. The downside of this longevity and pack stability falls upon the shoulders of the Red Talon, who must see generations of beloved mates and comrades, even children, grow old and die.

Wolves still remain endangered, for the most part. Especially in places where the law no longer protects them, humans take advantage of their unprotected status to hunt them. More and more, Red Talons find themselves in the position of acting as keeper to packs of wolves, either their birth-pack, or else one they encounter after their First Change.

Occasionally, one wolf Kinfolk may stand out above the rest of the pack. Perhaps she has passed the usual time for a Firsting (two years for a lupus Garou) and has not changed, indicating that something has gone amiss. Nevertheless, this wolf exhibits some types of reasoning that seem more Garou than wolf. These wolf-Kin may, in fact, possess one or two points of Gnosis, a sign that Gaia



TO PLAY A WOLF

The Red Talons have no human Kinfolk, therefore playing a lupus Kinfolk in a Werewolf chronicle would mean playing a wolf. Under rare circumstances, a chronicle based around a pack of Red Talons with one or two wolf-Kin might work, particularly as a one or two-session game with advanced players.

Anyone taking on the task of playing a wolf character needs to do a little research on wolf behavior in particular, and animal behavior in general to understand how to communicate without using words. Players may, of course, describe what they are doing and why they are doing it, but should take care not to attribute reasons that belong in the human realm.

Wolves live in the present, with limited concepts of past and future. They know certain things happen after certain other things happen. They act upon instinct and do not read intention. They don't know what another character means to do, only what that character does.

This does not mean that players should not attempt to play wolf Kinfolk, only that they should realize the limitations involved before they make the attempt.

has touched this wolf without fully calling her into service as a Garou. These rarities among wolf-Kin may learn certain limited Gifts, provided their Red Talon Garou kin elect to help them learn and intercede with the spirits to teach these Gifts in such a way that a wolf can perform them.

Wolfkin who possess Gifts generally do not use them on their own, but at the instigation of their Garou relatives. Examples of these Gifts are included in Chapter Three (pp. 67-68), but a Storyteller may decide other Gifts are suitable as well and add them to the chronicle.

Shadow Lords

Though many of their oldest Kinfolk families come from Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the Shadow Lords choose their Kin from the available humans around them. In modern times, Shadow Lord Kinfolk cover the gamut of races, ethnic backgrounds, and wolf breeds. These ambitious Garou look more to qualities other than national heritage for selecting their Kin. They prefer individuals who are, first and foremost, intelligent, cunning, and ambitious. They select lupus Kin in the same way, from wolves who demonstrate more intelligence and survival traits than others. Wherever possible, Shadow Lords prefer Kinfolk whose talents have made them powerful, either financially or politically.

For the most part, Shadow Lords show little favoritism between the sexes. Although more men than women, even today, have power in their own right, many women have come into power, while still others demonstrate the potential sought by the Shadow Lords. Like most Garou, the Shadow Lords take great care to protect their Kinfolk, so long as their Kin prove worthy of protection. A stupid or incautious Kinfolk can expect little help from the Lords should he find himself endangered.

Despite their ambitions, Shadow Lords do not always enjoy the type of resources they require to fulfill their responsibilities toward Gaia. For this, they rely on their Kinfolk, using their power and influence as they see fit.

Shadow Lords try to work within human organizations to minimize the damage humans can do to Gaia's creations, as well as to counter the effect of predatory beings, such as vampires, on human actions. Kinfolk become very useful in this regard, since they frequently enjoy positions of power (or potential power) in police forces, local and state governments, banking, and other business fields. Moreover, Shadow Lords and their Kinfolk recognize the great power wielded by the criminal underworld, whether Mafia, the Russian Mob, Mexican drug cartels, or other types of illegal groups. Wherever there is power, there are Shadow Lords – and their Kinfolk.

Where Garou from other tribes may keep their Kinfolk at a distance, Shadow Lords tend to work closely with their Kin, incorporating them into strike teams similar to those used by the Glass Walkers, or working side-by-side in the same institutions. Thus both Kinfolk and Garou have served on the same police force, sometimes within the same unit, whether general investigators, special victims units, vice, or other squads.

Silent Striders

Silent Striders draw their Kinfolk from among the world's nomadic populations. Some of the oldest Kinfolk families date as far back as the time when the Semitic tribes wandered in the desert. Other Kinfolk claim Romany, Mongol, tinkers, African and Central Asian nomads, and other historic wanderers. When the tribe arrived in the New World, their wanderings brought them into contact with the native tribes. In some cases, they were able to convince the Uktena to allow contact with the local population, so that a few Native American families are Strider Kinfolk.

Unlike the Garou, Silent Strider Kinfolk do not suffer under the mandate to keep wandering. Because of this, Kinfolk often provide their Garou kin with stable places to stop during their travels. With their Kinfolk, Striders can receive a bed for the night, a hot meal, supplies and, sometimes, companionship and romance.

Because of their perpetual wanderings, Striders often have the opportunity to visit with their lupus Kinfolk, making sure that the lupine blood stays strong within the tribe. They also have the ability to make sure their wolf packs receive the protection they need to survive in a world too rife with hunters.

Many Strider Kinfolk inherit the wandering “gene,” and take to the road in caravans such as traveling circuses, motorcycle clubs (or “gangs”), and similar groups. While these Kinfolk cannot supply Silent Strider Garou with a lot of resources or financial assistance, they do, however, provide a mobile support network.

Some Silent Strider Kinfolk inherit a trace of the tribe’s supernatural connection, and, along with the Fianna Kinfolk, have a propensity for receiving what is often called “the sight.” Some Kinfolk find work as professional psychics or paranormal investigators. Others try to ignore any hint of a supernatural gift, figuring that being Kin to a werewolf is supernatural enough.

Because Silent Striders keep very few records other than oral histories, they tend to lose their Kinfolk ties more than most other tribes. Many of the callow Kinfolk come from Silent Strider lineage.

Although the Silent Striders value and respect their Kinfolk, they do not usually form close ties to them due to their own compulsion to wander. Sometimes, a Garou and Kinfolk make a lifelong match. In that case, the Kinfolk usually elects to accompany their Garou partner.

Most Kinfolk pursue occupations that allow for the possibility of frequent moves. Strider Kinfolk serve as park rangers, wildlife photographers, explorers, and modern day adventurers, as well as members of such groups as Doctors Without Borders and many international rescue agencies. Others preserve the travelers’ lifestyle, while a few remain in one spot to provide waystations for their wandering Garou kin.

Striders do not treat female Kinfolk any differently from male family members unless they decide to choose a mate. Usually, male Striders remain with pregnant Kinfolk until the safe birth of a child. Likewise, female Garou tend to remain with their Kinfolk partners until they have given birth.

Silver Fangs

In the past, Silver Fangs chose their Kinfolk only from those humans with royal blood and from wolves with impeccable breeding. Since royalty has become rarer and so much harder to find, Silver Fangs have broadened their

Kinfolk base to include humans from notable bloodlines, including families that have places of respect in their various communities – the new nobility! Once a family takes its place in the ranks of Silver Fang Kin, their Garou kin keep a careful watch over them.

So concerned are the Silver Fangs with preserving certain bloodlines and ensuring that none of their approved lines grow weak through improper or casual mating, that they often take arranged marriages to the extreme. Silver Fangs do not mate for love, or even politics. They mate to keep their bloodlines pure. They believe themselves to be the leaders of Gaia’s warriors, and that they have a duty to breed the finest Garou possible to carry out their destiny. This means that they have to hold their Kinfolk to their own narrow standards.

Outside of breeding, the Silver Fangs act to protect their Kinfolk, as do most Garou tribes. They tend to interfere more in the daily lives of their Kin than some other tribes, expressing their disapproval if Kinfolk settle for jobs that do not recognize their stellar leadership qualities. They pull strings whenever they can to make certain that their Kinfolk get and keep prestigious jobs, and even prefer it when a Kinfolk is independently wealthy and does not need to work.

Anything their human families do that brings acclaim to them likewise improves the standing of the Silver Fangs – at least in their own eyes.

The spark of madness that marks the Silver Fangs also touches their Kinfolk to some degree, expressing itself in any of the popular neuroses or else in peculiar quirks that make them seem just “odd.”

Stargazers

The Stargazers present a challenge to the rest of the Garou. By striving to overcome their Rage instead of channeling it for Gaia’s use, they seem to deny the essence of what makes them Garou. Their Kinfolk face a similar dichotomy. As Kinfolk, they feel the pull of Gaia’s need for warriors. At the same time, the Garou who are closest to them hold them at a distance, refusing the bonds of attachment that provide a secure identity for Kinfolk families.

Most Stargazer Kinfolk come from populations associated with the mysticism of the East. Early Stargazers selected Kinfolk from Nepal and the Himalayan region as well as both the Near East (India) and the Far East. In modern times, Stargazers select Kinfolk from all over the world, so long as they possess the qualities they deem preferable for their tribal aims. They seek out mystics, pacifists, and other people who turn away from war as a solution to the world’s problems. Many Stargazer Kinfolk now come from some Native American tribes, usually with the permission of local Uktena.

Of all the Garou, the Stargazers cherish their Kinfolk most and love them the least. The ingrained habits of non-attachment lead Stargazer Garou to keep their Kinfolk at a

distance, becoming part of their lives only when they choose to breed or need their assistance. In many cases, Stargazers hide their Kinfolk away in out of the way communities, making sure they are safe and protected.

While some Kinfolk may resent the lack of closeness to their Garou kin, others recognize the respect with which the Stargazers regard them and appreciate the ability to live their lives as they see fit.

Some few Stargazers opt to settle down and live peacefully with their Kinfolk. These are most likely to form enclaves and secure compounds closed away from the outside world. Many Kinfolk choose occupations as philosophers, counselors, and other careers that profit from detachment. Some become doctors, nurses, and members of emergency response groups when they interact with the outside world. They find their sense of detachment helpful for keeping calm in stressful circumstances. Others become teachers, spreading their attitude of peaceful detachment along with their lessons.

Uktena

Of all the Garou tribes, the Uktena have the highest regard for their Kinfolk. Rather than simply cherishing and protecting them like most tribes, the Uktena view their Kinfolk as an integral part of their lives. Kinfolk participate in many Uktena rites, attend moots, voice their opinions; share songs, dances, and lore freely (or as freely as any secret-keeper shares anything); and acknowledge a wide variety of peoples as their Kin.

Once, the Uktena only selected members of the First People who were among the first inhabitants of the Pure Lands; when the original First People died out or disappeared, they chose Kinfolk from among the tribes of the southeastern mountains, the south, and southwest, leaving the northern tribes for their Little Brothers, the Wendigo. After the Wyrmscomers destroyed many of their Kinfolk, the Uktena opened their hearts to other displaced tribes – the people of Africa brought to North and South America as slaves, as well as later immigrants who suffered from the European Wyrmsbringers. Eventually, Uktena could count native Hawai'ians, Australian aborigines, Maori tribes, Siberian tribal folk, Polynesians, and Caribbean native peoples. Everyone, in fact, became welcome as potential Kinfolk except for the European settlers who arrived in the aftermath of Columbus' voyages.

From this general population, Uktena look particularly for individuals with a strong spark of spirituality. Many of their Kinfolk have some knowledge of the spirit world, either as shamans, medicine men and women, spirit healers, and the like. Others have simply found their way into or connected with the spirit world on one or more occasions. Uktena tend to nurture the spirituality of Kinfolk and usually try to teach them Gifts wherever possible.

Often Uktena Kinfolk dwell within the caern or at least within the bawn of the sept and share in its caretaking as much as they can. They do not fully participate in all Uktena dealings, but they rarely feel the sense of exclusion that Kinfolk of other tribes experience.

Formerly, the Uktena kept themselves at a distance from their Kinfolk, but the events of history convinced them that their fates and those of their Kinfolk intertwined so closely that they needed to keep their Kinfolk close to them. In many ways, Uktena Kinfolk enjoy belonging to a large extended family.

Because many native people tend not to marry within their clans but rely on outbreeding with other clans of the tribe to keep their bloodlines vital, many Uktena Kinfolk rely on tribal matchmakers to select partners for mating or for longer relationships. Even the Garou generally follow the advice of the matchmakers, who consult the spirits and their oral records to make sure the marriages or liaisons do not violate any tribal taboos. Within those strictures, Uktena Garou and Kinfolk often find love as well as respect and affection in their relations with each other.

Wendigo

Despite their reputation for harshness and ferocity, the Wendigo are second only to the Uktena in their deep involvement with the lives of their Kinfolk. Like the Wendigo Garou, the Kinfolk, many of whom come from the native tribes of the extreme northern regions of the American continent, face a day-to-day struggle for survival. The Inuit, Aleuts, Yakuts, and other arctic tribes live in a harsh and unforgiving environment. The tribes of the northern and northeastern U. S., such as the tribes that made up the People of the Six Nations in the American northeast (Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas, and Tuscaroras) dealt with the historical encroachment of the Wyrmsbringers onto their lands and their own removal to reservations. In modern times, they still deal with grinding poverty and substandard living conditions. As much as they can, the Wendigo try to keep their Kinfolk true to their native customs and traditions. They also include their Kin in many of their rites and teach them Gifts to give them an edge particularly useful in the cold arctic and tundra regions of Canada, Alaska, and Siberia.

Since the Wendigo Garou exist in a state of perpetual warfare against both the predations of the Wyrms and the presence of the European Garou, they often spend time away from their Kinfolk as they carry on their constant attacks on their enemies. Protection of their Kin looms high in their system of priorities. They know that without their Kin, they cannot exist.

Of more concern than even their human Kin, however, is the state of wolves in the American north and in Canada. The near-extinction of the wolf has led many Wendigo to find

and preserve their own wolf packs in isolated lands seldom trod by humans. They, more than any tribe, realize that the loss of the wolf would spell the death of the Garou as the human strain would eventually thin out the Garou blood. They believe that they are also the key to the salvation of the Red Talons as a tribe, should those Garou ever decide to mate with humans. To this end, some Wendigo and their Kinfolk practice living as minimally as possible to provide a less threatening environment for social interactions with Red Talons in Homid form.

Many Kinfolk realize that in spite of their Garou kin's desire to separate themselves from mainstream culture and its Weaver-saturated standards, spending time among the Weaver-infested society that surrounds them provides them with information on events that might affect the native tribes as well as the Garou. These Kinfolk make themselves part of the mainstream, but usually choose occupations that allow them to help their people. Work in wildlife conservation, in the medical professions, as lawyers, and organizers for Indian Rights keeps Kinfolk up on the times and able to warn their Garou relations if trouble lies ahead.

Whenever they can, Wendigo take Kinfolk with them and teach them how to hunt and how to survive in the northern wilderness. They try to encourage their Kin to keep in touch with Gaia's world as much as possible, since they recognize the propensity of many tribal natives toward falling into despair, turning to alcohol or drugs, or becoming part of the growing criminal element that grows in areas where legitimate work and fair treatment are the exception rather than the rule.

Although Wendigo almost exclusively select their Kinfolk from among the native tribes of Canada, the northern American states, Siberia, and other sub-arctic and arctic tribes, exceptions always exist.

Kinfolk of the Fallen and the Lost

Bunyip

As a Garou tribe, the Bunyip are extinct, killed largely by the European Garou who settled Australia in the centuries of exploration that also populated the American continent. Some human Kinfolk do exist, in very small numbers, but they have scattered among the Aboriginal tribes of the Australian bush and the wild lands of Tasmania. Although their animal Kin, the thylacine wolf (or thylacine tiger) has been extinct since the last one died in captivity in 1936, rumors persist of sightings of these elusive marsupials from time to time. In truth, a few groups of thylacine still exist far from human contact, guarded over by spirits of the Australian and Tasmanian Umbras in order to keep them undiscovered and unmolested.

No Bunyip Garou have been born to Kinfolk since the war that annihilated the Bunyip drove the few survivors into the Umbra. Kinfolk resemble the aboriginal tribes of Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania. They are small, dark-skinned people with dark hair and eyes. They live in tribes and dwell in harmony with the land, honoring the spirits of animals, plants, and minerals. Although civilization encroaches, drawing many aborigines away from their culture into mainstream civilization, a few remain true to their origins and their relationship with the Dreamtime. They tend to place little value on material possessions, live very simply, cherish their children, and enjoy a greater spiritual connection with the world than more "civilized people." Occasionally, one of them may mate with Kinfolk from another tribe, usually Uktena, but none have yet born any Changing children.

Black Spiral Dancers

Of all the Garou tribes, the Black Spiral Dancers have, perhaps, the clearest opinion of their Kinfolk. Some individuals descended from those Picts who once called themselves Kin to the White Howlers now live as chattel to their Garou, for all practical purposes. But the Dancers don't limit themselves to a certain ethnic type. They relish stealing Kinfolk from other tribes. They seem to have a knack for finding callow families, where they get offspring through rape, one-night stands, or through abduction. Anytime they can, they insinuate themselves into a family of Kinfolk, callow or otherwise, with an eye to corruption or seduction.

Everything the outside world knows about dysfunctional families exists in larger-than-life form within the Black Spiral community. Rape, incest, abuse of all kinds, characterize the lives of these Kin. Many of them find relief from their day to day existence as whipping boys and punching bags in substance abuse of various kinds. Others turn to crime not only as a way of bringing in money for the tribe, but as a way to wrest some sort of power for themselves within a community that allows them no real sense of self-worth.

Many Black Spiral Kinfolk bear the burden of severe mental disorders. The Silver Fangs may be "touched" with a spark of madness; the Dancers are completely mired in it. If they aren't born with a disorder, their families do their best to foster one or more in them from an early age.

Many Kinfolk children don't know regular schooling. If they attended public schools, the signs of their abusive home life would bring down unwanted attention from social services and law enforcement agencies. Instead, Black Spiral parents "home school" their children, at least until they reach an age where they can conceal their home life of their own free will and perhaps cooperate with their older relatives in spreading their corruption around.

Spiral Kinfolk, when they mix with the outside world, tend to do so with an intent to corrupt all they touch. They take

pride in luring runaway girls and boys into prostitution, drug addiction, or worse, receiving gruff approval from their Garou kin for every soul they manage to lead into the Wyrms' service.

While many Kinfolk don't really know the reason why they live in hell, browbeaten and physically dominated by certain gangster types who seem to run their families, other Kinfolk know some of the Dancers' secrets all too well. Often, crimes committed by Dancer Kinfolk get written up by local authorities as the work of Satanic or devil-worshipping cults. The rantings and ravings of some Kinfolk, when brought in to police stations for questioning about certain crimes, sound more like the nonsense of incoherent cultists, when the truth is so much worse.

Occasionally, Black Spiral Kinfolk live in total ignorance of who they are. All they know is that a life that is difficult enough, regardless of social class, becomes a living hell when certain relatives show up. They soon learn that resistance to their "crazy Uncle John" or "Aunt June" only leads to worse outcomes than if they had simply given in to their relatives' depravities. In some ways, these Kinfolk have the cruelest fates, for during the times when their Garou kin are away, they struggle to tell themselves that things will get better, that there is hope for a brighter future. Unfortunately, the Voice of the Spiral says that they are wrong.

Croatan

The Croatan Garou sacrificed themselves and their Kinfolk to defeat the Eater of Souls in early Colonial America.

Only a very few Croatan Kinfolk survived; those lucky ones found new homes with either the Wendigo or Uktena tribes. With no tribal totem, also sacrificed in the ceremony that defeated the Eater of Souls, the tribe ceased to exist. Children born from Croatan Kinfolk, if they change, are considered as members of the tribe that gave their ancestors a home.

Although some local or state governments have recognized one or another tribe as the descendants of the Croatan Indians, no new Croatan Garou have been born from them or from any other tribe. The sacrifice of the Croatan seems final, since even their Kin Fetches disappeared along with the tribe.

White Howlers

When the White Howler Garou danced the Black Spiral and transformed into the Black Spiral Dancers, their Kinfolk changed as well. A few White Howler Kinfolk managed to escape that fate, fleeing to other tribes to warn them of the tragic fate of their Garou kin. Those surviving Kinfolk, with no tribe to claim them and no totem spirit to mark their children, either joined with the Kinfolk of other tribes or else disappeared into the ranks of the lost, or callow, Kinfolk.

Most of the White Howler Kinfolk today find their homes with either the Get of Fenris or the Fianna. Like the Fianna, they share a Celtic heritage, stemming from ancient Pictish blood. Like the Get of Fenris, the White Howlers made a name for themselves for their courage in battle. The



tales of their prowess as fearless, even sometimes reckless warriors, earned them respect from the Get of Fenris, who managed to ignore their Celtic lineage.

Every now and then, a Garou is born to Kinfolk of Howler ancestry who appears to be a throwback to the original tribe. White-furred and wiry in wolf form, these Garou mirror the Howlers of old. The resemblance ends with their physical appearance, however. They no longer have a tribal identity apart from their current one, and are no different from any other Get or Fianna. Likewise, few Kinfolk exist who have not mingled their bloodlines with generations of Fianna or Get of Fenris.

More often, a Garou who looks like one of the Howlers of old just serves as a bitter reminder of the tragic loss of a tribe to the Wyrms.

Kinfolk Fellowships

For as long as Kinfolk have existed, groups of Kin have formed societies or fellowships. These groups serve many purposes. They provide Kinfolk of one tribe with a means of bringing together people who have something important in common – their connection to the Garou Nation. Some of these fellowships provide purely social contact, much like book clubs or bridge clubs do for many individuals. Others form around a common purpose, much as the fraternal societies such as the Elks, Kiwanis, or Rotary clubs, or care providers such as the Red Cross. Some unite under the aegis of a particular political or environmental issue, like many conservation and PAC committees. Some include only members of a single tribe, while others have an open membership policy. Some are restricted to Kinfolk only, while others have Garou sponsorship or one or two Garou members. All of these societies exist under the radar of mainstream society.

A few societies exist that are secret even to the Garou. These usually bring Kinfolk together under the banner of dissent or even rebellion. Secret Kinfolk societies rival similar mainstream societies both in their extreme attitudes and in the care they take to remain invisible to the Garou and to the outside world. The penalties for membership meted out by human authorities are bad enough; those handed out by Garou who realize that their Kinfolk may be working against them tend to be much, much worse.

The following groups represent a sampling of Kinfolk organizations. Storytellers and players should feel free to create their own either as additions to, or replacements for, these groups. Membership in these groups may provide a means for initiating a chronicle involving Kinfolk.

The Black Eagles

Among paramilitary and mercenary groups worldwide, the Black Eagles have a reputation for excellence, efficiency, honor, and swiftness. These crack professionals take pride

CODE OF THE BLACK EAGLES

Members of the Black Eagle Commando Unit affirm the following conditions to any mission they accept:

1. I will accept no mission that involves the deaths of non-combatant women or men.
2. I will accept no mission that involves causing harm to children under any circumstances (with the exception of temporary discomfort in the interest of conducting a rescue mission).
3. I will accept no mission that proves harmful to the environment.
4. I will accept no mission that causes or results in the useless deaths of animals or the extinction of a species, however useless it may seem. I will use my discretion or that of my unit leader when a mission involves the deaths of disease-bearing species, and even then, I will use the minimum necessary force to carry out the mission.
5. I will, in all circumstances and at all times, refrain from any actions that may cause insult, injury, or cast a stain upon my personal code of ethics and upon the name and reputation of the Black Eagles

(Here follows an oath sworn on something or someone most valued by the member taking the oath, as well as the signature of the sworn-in member.)

in their record of accomplishing their mission anywhere in the world within 48 hours. It takes them a little bit longer to do the impossible. Their service comes at great cost, and they only accept jobs they consider worthy of their attention. The truth is that this group of primarily Get of Fenris Kinfolk rarely refuses a commission; only those missions that actively or passively aid the goals of the Wyrms receive a sharp and absolute veto from them – and often spurs an Eagle-initiated strike against the group that wanted to hire them. Word soon spread: Be careful what you wish for. Make sure your cause is righteous.

Needless to say, only a few people know the true nature of the Black Eagles, though the mercenary community and those who hire them know and respect the Eagles' code of honor.

The missions undertaken by the Black Eagles include raids, extractions, security consultation (for Garou and Kinfolk only), training, reconnaissance, insertions, neutral-

izations, acquisitions of persons or property, deliveries and pickups, search and retrievals, rescues, emergency disaster relief, among other small unit operations. Gerald Schwartz, the current battalion commander, has retired from field operations, though rumor has it that he is preparing for one last glorious mission, which he does not intend to survive. "Retirement is for pussies," he has been known to remark, although he does not require others to hold to this philosophy.

Sandor "Sandy" Hunter, Schwartz' adopted son, has received training directly from Schwartz and now leads many of the more dangerous missions. Noise within the ranks says that he will take over leadership of the Black Eagles within the next year or two. Tall and muscular, with dirty blond hair tied back at the neck, dark eyes that reveal nothing, and a harsh face with too many stress lines for his 27 years, Hunter has already earned the trust and respect of the majority of Black Eagles. Only a few still mistrust him, and they have a difficult time pointing out why.

Black Eagles' HQ is a well-defended 2,500-acre ranch-compound somewhere in Montana, where training takes place and where Schwartz handles logistics and contract negotiations. The compound includes an arsenal, where state-of-the-art equipment is stored, a large garage for specialized vehicles, a private airstrip and hangar for the group's helicopters and small planes, indoor and outdoor training facilities, a quartermaster's building, security complex and living quarters for a few full-time residents, as well as rooms for members to stay for shorter periods of time. Some stories circulate about levels beneath the compound where the Eagles maintain their own detention facility for "special" prisoners, though only those with "need to know" status are aware of who qualifies for such treatment. Schwartz also maintains a warehouse in Washington, D.C. to serve as a secondary headquarters. Some other facilities are located in several countries around the world to provide safe houses and recruitment centers. Total membership at any given time is around 100 personnel worldwide, including two or three 25-person companies capable of splitting up into smaller units. An extensive network of support personnel and contacts enable the Black Eagles to acquire almost anything a combat team might need for their missions. Schwartz reportedly has contacts within the NSA and Homeland Security which keep the government from noticing the Eagles' activities.

Although the Black Eagles readily come to the assistance of their Get of Fenris Garou kin, they pride themselves on not needing the assistance of Garou to accomplish their missions. Though tracing Schwartz's actual Kinfolk lineage has resulted in so many dead ends that some people believe he has no actual Kinfolk blood, the Get still recognizes him as a "spirit-Kin" by virtue of his talents and dedication to the cause. During his stint in the army, he witnessed a Get

of Fenris in his Crinos form without batting an eyelash. Another time, he survived a punch from his Garou friend during a precipitous frenzy. Another Get pulled him away from his friend and managed to defuse the situation before any deaths occurred, but Schwartz' reputation for toughness and courage grew immeasurably due to the incident.

After his honorable discharge from the military, Schwartz continued to make money by working in the reserves, saving it for his new purpose. Discovering the existence of the Garou had given his life meaning and provided him with an outlet for his insatiable energy and high "prey drive." Founding the Black Eagles, he maintains, saved his life. Currently, Schwartz still handpicks all new members, though he now brings Hunter into the decision-making process.

While non-Garou employers pay steep prices for the Eagles' assistance, Garou of any tribe need only pay for transportation and expenses. Although Schwartz jokes about retiring to Florida, some of his colleagues believe he actually intends on starting another secret compound deep within the Everglades for his own mysterious purposes.

The Gaia Network

Started by a group of Children of Gaia Kinfolk, the Gaia Network and the Gaia Youth Network comprise the largest Kinfolk network to date, a position it has held for over 30 years. The organization's stated purpose is to keep track of the Children's Kinfolk and Garou around the world, formulate policies and serve as an advisory body to all Children of Gaia septs. Kinfolk hold most of the staff positions, with a few Garou regulars helping the organizational effort.

While the Children of Gaia do not enjoy a reputation as the most organized group, the Kinfolk of the Gaia Network hope to corral the energy of the tribe's many Kinfolk by enabling Kin and Garou to locate one another and to work together. It serves as an action organization, a way for Kinfolk and Garou singles to meet one another, and a way to encourage camaraderie within a group already known for its social outreach capacity.

The Gaia Network has recently opened communications with the Locksmiths (see below), seeking a closer relationship, perhaps even a merger of the two groups. While Children of Gaia and the Glass Walkers may not seem likely partners, both groups believe in moving forward with the times. Some Children want to take advantage of new technology by using the expertise of the Locksmiths, while some Locksmiths want to learn some of the Children's social ease with various elements of society. Other members of both Kinfolk groups remain adamantly opposed to anything more than careful cooperation.

While the Network accepts members on their own say-so, a number of members feel that younger Kinfolk trust too readily and fear that the organization may eventually become a liability to Kinfolk and Garou everywhere.

The Locksmiths

The Locksmiths appeared as an organization in the late 1990s, when internet junkies started stretching their legs and discovering all the things one could do using the world wide web. Started by a Glass Walker known only as Strangelove, the Locksmiths serves as a Glass Walker Kinfolk network. Garou and Kinfolk all over the world use it to keep in touch with one another and to track the latest goings on of Pentex and other Wyrms-infested companies. Lately, the Locksmiths have added a website devoted exclusively to fracking and the possible natural and supernatural dangers it presents.

The group's first projects were two large databases: a list of all known tainted products, and a list of all the companies that belonged to Pentex or any other Wyrms-owned company. An interactive website called Tale Time combines state of the art graphics with stories of legendary Garou and Kinfolk as a repository of lore and history.

At first, the Locksmiths maintained tight controls over what kinds of projects they undertook. Current thinking, however, has led to a more open policy, as Glass Walkers seek to bring some of the other tribes into the data stream.

NAMID *(North American Indian Decree)*

Also called the Star Dancers, the translation of the Chippewa word "named," this network of Wendigo Kinfolk (with a few Uktena Kin members) has at its core the well-being of Native Americans. The organization seeks to break the cycle that leads to poverty and related problems among Native Americans living on reservations and in mainstream American society. NAMID has established scholarship programs for Native Americans attending colleges, graduate schools, medical, veterinary and law schools, and other professional educational institutions. They also provide a network of attorneys, a legal defense fund, and a political action committee to lobby for Native American civil rights, land claims, and other issues.

The organization also has an unsanctioned militant wing that attracts angry young radicals (and older ones as well) who decry going through channels and political action as ineffective and who openly favor violence as the only way to achieve justice. Some supporters of NAMID fear that the organization may fall apart through internal dissension or that the radical element may split off to form a more dangerous and uncontrolled splinter group.

The Silvertree Genealogical Society

Founded in 1989 by June Richmond Barrows, after the death of her Silver Fang husband, the Silvertree Genealogical Society continued and expanded Mrs. Barrows' interest in family history and genealogy. Today, the elderly but still spry June Barrows, while no longer able to devote her full time

to the Society, still oversees what has come to be the largest and most detailed data bank for Silver Fangs and Garou of all tribes. Any Garou interested in researching her lineage, either in order to find a likely mate or to see if she really is related to a famous Garou, is welcome to use the archives.

According to Mrs. Barrows, the material in the archives dates back approximately 600 years, or to the sixteenth century. Originally, Mrs. Barrows started collecting information in various forms. Some rare documents remain preserved under glass and anyone wishing to consult them must take precautions to avoid contaminating the fragile documents. An antique card catalog containing cards meticulously scribed in pen and ink represents the beginnings of Mrs. Barrows' efforts. As technology for data storage evolved, the Society has availed itself of more modern storage techniques. The Society pays young Kinfolk to serve as summer interns, providing them with room and board as well as a stipend, to help bring all the records into the twenty-first century. In the meantime, genealogical researchers may need to consult multiple resources such as the card file, rolls of microfilm, microfiche, computerized databases, CD-ROMs, and flash drives.

At first, Mrs. Barrows ran the Society from her home, but eventually spatial considerations made this impractical. Today, the Silvertree Genealogical Society has its own building on the grounds of the Barrows estate (named "Silvertree"). Her husband's original sept has a caern in a wooded part of the estate. In addition to the seasonal interns, a full-time staff of Kinfolk and one or two young Garou take care of day-to-day business, including assisting visitors, fielding phone calls and email, maintaining several Internet groups, and conducting original research when new information arises.

Recently, the Society has undertaken a couple of new projects. One group, headed by Tara Touches-the-Stars, a young relative of June Barrows, searches for information concerning lost Kinfolk families, hoping to bring more Kinfolk back into the fold. Another, riskier project headed by Daniel Trefoil, a Silver Fang Kinfolk and his life-partner Creta Netglider, a Glass Walker Theurge, has taken on the task of putting together a genealogical file of Black Spiral Dancers and any White Howler Kinfolk they may come across. Most of their work takes place at a distance, using remote information gathering. Both Daniel and Creta believe that their work may lead to some important discoveries.

The Sisterhood

The Sisterhood is more than a network of Black Fury Kinfolk. It is an organization made up of Furies and Kin, both male and female, lupus and homid. Their goal: to work together for the good of the tribe. While common belief labels the Black Furies as anti-male as well as matriarchal, the truth that all Furies recognize is that without male Kinfolk, the tribe would not exist. In addition, some societies look more



favorably upon men to act as spokespersons, particularly in the Middle and Near East. Many male Fury Kinfolk hold prominent positions in the Sisterhood.

One of the most important missions of the Sisterhood is to enable refugees, abused women and children — and men as well — to flee dangerous situations and seek out havens where they can live safely. In earlier times, the Sisterhood cooperated with the Underground Railroad in the U. S., to help slaves get to free states or to Canada. In almost every situation where a refugee population has looked for a way to freedom, whether for political or religious reasons, the Sisterhood has been there to help them.

Some members of the Sisterhood are *strega*, or witches; others work as administrators, teachers, healers, and field agents leading groups of refugees out of danger, usually at great personal risk.

Another significant effort undertaken by the Sisterhood involves the purchase of lands once held by the Furies, including many sacred sites. The Fury Kinfolk hope to establish their own safe enclaves, independent of any country and responsible only to Gaia. They work in rainforest reclamation in Central and South America and have put a lot of time and effort into locating and protecting the vanishing wolves, including some lesser known varieties once believed extinct.

Widdershins Society

Twenty years ago, Fianna Kinfolk Padraig and Aidan Conneely formed Widdershins, a Celtic folk band made up of their musically talented friends, all from Fianna stock. Playing the Irish folk songs they had heard as children, as well as original material in the folk style, they gathered enough of a following to go professional, with a contract, albums (later, CDs), and tours based mostly in the southeastern U.S. Gradually, they attracted more Kinfolk followers through word of mouth, and the idea of a fellowship that could relay messages between Kinfolk along the Gulf and East coasts arose. So did the idea of Kinfolk bands.

The Conneely twins are in their forties, now, but the band keeps going even as its members age and, in some cases, move on to other things. Other Celtic folk groups have since joined the Widdershins Society: Wolves of the Highlands, specializing in Scottish folk songs and featuring bagpipes and Scottish pipe and drums, makes their way up and down the Appalachian region; Gaelsong, an *acapella* group of Kinfolk, regularly tour the arts and crafts fairs and anywhere else that invites them; Taliesin's Songbird, a Welsh folk band with connections on both sides of the Atlantic; and there are others. Some of these groups are professional, while others exist as serious hobbies or compete in amateur folk competitions and music festivals. All of them hold their

Kinfolk heritage as a point of pride. An occasional Fianna Galliard has joined the society, strengthening ties within an already strongly-connected tribe.

While the Widdershins Society remains a Fianna society, other tribes have followed suit, and some have formed their own Kinfolk musical societies. Pan and the Muse, a duo made up of a pair of Black Fury fraternal twins, Andromache and Andros Pelopaneus, bring ancient Greek songs into the modern age and anchor a group of Black Fury male and female Kinfolk; Gertie's Jug Band centers around a large network of Bone Gnawer Kin, providing Cajun and Zydeco music as well as soup kitchens to feed and entertain homeless populations; Potlatch Songs consists of young Wendigo Kinfolk musicians eager to bring a strong environmental and natural living message to the world, believing that this can help strengthen Gaia for the coming battle. Each tribe has at least one musical Kinfolk group providing musical and social connections.

The idea of uniting all these groups into one Kinfolk mega-society has recently taken hold. While some Garou tribes may object to this kind of inter-tribal cooperation, proponents of the concept feel certain that such an organization is inevitable.

Wolfenhome (formerly Viatopia)

Experimental communities have proliferated throughout history. In the United States, alone, religious groups such as the Oneida Community and the Shakers, cult compounds such as the Reverend Moon's Unification Church, and societies based on certain political theories, such as Henry George's "Single Tax" proponents, have tried to make a go of creating their own alternative societies.

Over and over again these attempts, however bright their start, failed after a few years for one reason or another. The Garou of Wolfenhome hope to change that.

Shadow Lord Kinfolk Adam Preston bought some property in southern Minnesota in the early 1990s with family funds and started a community for Garou and Kinfolk of all tribes. He called the community Viatopia, presumably wanting to express the idea of a "viable utopia." Although the initial members were Shadow Lord Kin or Garou, by the end of the first year, all tribes had at least one or two Kinfolk members.

Preston contributed the initial plot of land, but later donors and investors helped increase the community's land holdings to three times its original size. The governing board, a council of officials who serve four-year elected terms with no term limits, hopes to continue to grow the community based on the idea of responsible residency.

All residents pay a share of the cost for land upkeep. Members also volunteer time for outdoor or administrative work and attend town meetings. Once the community reached the point of self-sustainability, it changed its name

to "Wolfenhome" (inspired by legends of Wolfhome, an Umbral Realm) and incorporated as a municipality. Most residents now hold paying jobs within the community, many of them as small business owners or independent small farmers. Wolfenhome now boasts its own school, clinic and emergency medical center, post office, member-owned power company and community center. A non-denominational church building occupies a site near the town center for members who are so inclined.

Wolfenhome has a covenant which requires that members be either Garou or Kinfolk, though some citizens object to the exclusion clause. Supporters feel that the community is predicated on a Garou-Kinfolk membership and feel that allowing the general population to settle there would not only defeat the town's purpose but would make life difficult for the Garou who make it their home.

The underlying philosophy behind Wolfenhome aims at achieving full acceptance for Kinfolk in Garou society. This includes Kinfolk representation at moots, the right to refuse assignments deemed too dangerous or ill-planned, and reproductive freedom. Members seek not only to change the policies but also Garou attitudes towards their Kinfolk.

The community has supporters among the Children of Gaia, the Bone Gnawers, and the Black Furies, while other tribes, namely the Silver Fangs, Get of Fenris, and more traditional Fianna seem reluctant to accept so much change so quickly.

Preston's dream has fueled Wolfenhome since its inception nearly a quarter of a century ago. Now in his late 50s, Preston still remains actively involved in all aspects of the community, where he has served on the governing council without a break. Some folks both inside and outside the community wonder whether Wolfenhome will sustain itself after Preston either retires or dies. His charismatic personality and straightforward way of dealing with all types of people have eased what might have been a difficult path of growth and development for the community. Enough people associate Preston with the image of a cult leader to raise the question of true viability among many.

The jury is still out.

Secret Societies

In addition to Kinfolk societies known to the Garou, a few Kinfolk groups hold secret meetings and strive to keep the knowledge of their existence hidden from their Garou kin. One or two of these groups pose no real threat to the Garou; they arose, instead, out of the inherent need to keep something secret from individuals who seem to know everything about them and can call on spirits to find out what they don't know. Other groups, however, have more sinister purposes, ones that the Garou would not appreciate. Since the discovery of the Skin Dancers, the Garou have

become extremely twitchy about the idea of secrecy among their Kinfolk. Even the most innocent of the following groups tread very carefully around the Garou, knowing that discovery might mean their deaths, regardless of how valuable they are as Kinfolk.

Judges of Gaia

Five years ago, a Silver Fang Kinfolk named Curtis Cannon, a graduate student in history, took a year off from his official studies to get some first-hand experience of American historic sites. He spent some months in California, studying some of the Spanish missions and interacting with the Native tribes of the region. When he returned to his studies, he was a different man. He graduated with a degree in American history, with a specialty in pre-Columbian tribal cultures. In accordance with his family's plans, he accepted a teaching position at a local college near his hometown of Baltimore, Maryland. In secret he contacted some Kinfolk he had met during his travels, and created the organization that fulfilled the vision he had received in California.

As part of a New Age "Native American Experience," Cannon had gone on a vision quest, enhanced by sacred herbs and mushrooms. During his vision in the desert, he encountered Gaia herself weeping for her Garou children who had gone astray by abusing their Kinfolk and placing themselves in position of power over their Kin. Instead of working with them as partners, they were lording it over Kinfolk and running their lives.

Cannon offered to find a way to change this situation, promising Gaia that he would do everything in his power to change the structure of Garou and Kinfolk relations, and would rid the world of those Garou who refused to change. The Judges of Gaia was born.

The organization has around twenty members, centered mostly in the Mid-Atlantic States. Cannon hand-picked all the members for their belief in his vision and their personal loyalty. The group's mission consists of collecting information about Garou who have run afoul of Kinfolk, either through physical abuse or through some other form of behavior that has denied Kinfolk their rights, as they see them. When they have assembled enough evidence about an individual Garou, the group conducts a trial of that individual *in absentia*. If the tribunal, made up of Cannon and his three closest advisors, finds the Garou guilty of crimes against Kinfolk, it passes a death sentence.

Members of the group with some form of combat training form cadres of assassins and put together a plan to carry out the death sentence. So far, the Judges of Gaia have accounted for only two successful missions, causing the death of their target by mysterious means. Whether or not the cadre uses special poisons, silver weapons, or sabotage remains a mystery. Cannon allows his death cadres complete independence of action.

Though this organization's founder is a Silver Fang, it attracts dissatisfied Kinfolk of all tribes. So far they have guarded their secret closely, but too many disappearances of Garou might call attention to their existence without extreme caution. Those Kinfolk accepted for membership pledge oaths of secrecy and solidarity to one another, and only Kinfolk with undeniable proof of serious Garou misconduct are even considered for membership. Every member of the Judges considers himself already under a death sentence by the Garou, but believes in doing what must be done.

The Eleusines

Named for the Eleusinian mysteries of the ancient Greek cult of Demeter and Persephone, this secret society of female Kinfolk originally began with the Black Furies Kin, but now includes women of almost every tribe. The Uktena and Wendigo female Kinfolk have their own ceremonies, so membership in the Eleusines usually numbers only one or two at any given time. The secrecy of this group lies in the fact that it has always been a secret society. According to the Fury Kin, the Eleusines have existed for as long as there have been Kinfolk.

The purpose of this society is to initiate and prepare female Kinfolk for their "duties" as mates to the Garou and mothers of their children. The Eleusines maintain that werewolves, because of the animal nature that lies so close to the surface, need special understanding to be successful in not only mating with their Kin, but in sustaining a relationship.

When the Children of Gaia Kin joined the Eleusines in significant numbers, sometime during the Middle Ages according to the group's lorekeepers, they added to it the three-fold nature of "the goddess." Young, unmarried, and unmated women who join the cult do so as "maids." Their job consists of learning what they need to know to mate with Garou and bear their children. Once they have borne children, they enter the second stage, becoming "mothers," whose job is to serve as examples for future maids.

Since the likelihood of becoming a widow is higher among mates of Garou, the third stage is composed of those who have loved and lost: the "crones" or "hags." Sometimes these women are quite young, but they remain as crones unless they remarry and reclaim their status as mothers. The crones are the actual teachers of the mysteries, the leaders of the meetings, and, in some cases, matchmakers within their tribes.

While some Garou may know of the existence of the Eleusines, they do not interfere with the practices of the cult since their beliefs tend to support the Garou. In the aftermath of the Skin Dancer problem, the Eleusine leadership has gone so far as to swear to Garou female leaders that they intend no harm to any Garou. Thus, they have become something of an open secret, one the Garou agree to not notice.

What they don't realize is that the Eleusines have become a powerful force within the Kinfolk. Not only do they unite most of the tribes, but they also exercise a great deal of influence within their human families and with the Garou with whom they mate. Some believe that if Kinfolk society is ever to change its status with regard to the Garou, the initiative will come from this group.

Afterlife

As spirits dedicated to Gaia, the Garou believe that when they die the good death, their spirits enter the Umbra where those who do not reincarnate become ancestor spirits. This belief receives confirmation by the ability of Theurges to connect with these ancestor spirits, speak with them, take counsel from them, and, when necessary, bind them into fetishes.

While most Kinfolk believe this as well for their Garou relatives, their beliefs about their own afterlives differ greatly from tribe to tribe. No official belief system or religious canon exists to explain what happens to Kinfolk after they die. Some Kinfolk find no real dichotomy in the religious traditions of their human cultural traditions. Many Fianna Kinfolk remain practicing Catholics, just as a number of Get of Fenris attend Lutheran services. There are even one or two Fenris Kinfolk families who practice their Quaker beliefs. Other Kinfolk join the revivalist movements that have returned to the worship of their native pantheons: the Greek pantheon for Black Fury Kin, Celtic religion and druidism for some Fianna, and the resurgence of religions acknowledging Norse deities for Fenris Kinfolk. The Stargazers and their Kin have long found truth and understanding in the wisdom of the east, so some Stargazer Kin are Buddhists, or followers of the Dao. Silent Striders claim religions such as Hinduism, Islam, or Judaism, depending on the geographic origins of their family. The Shadow Lords Kinfolk have participated in the revival of Eastern European paganism, while some Silver Fangs are Russian Orthodox.

Some few Black Fury Kin identify with Greek Orthodox religion and culture, placing them at a religious divide with their Greek pantheon worshiping Kinfolk. Glass Walkers tend to have a more materialistic view of their own afterlives, or at least do not take religion seriously. Their beliefs sometime include quasi-science fiction ideas involving cryogenics and the potential for downloading personalities after death. Bone Gnawers tend to look on life and death as a continuous process of recycling, and rarely talk about any personal beliefs on afterlife. The Children of Gaia, not surprisingly, adopt many New Age religious beliefs or adopt the Garou afterlife model. Both the Uktena and Wendigo Kinfolk tend to honor tribal religious customs, which tend to be similar to those of the Garou.

Many Kinfolk, especially those who are aware of the Dark Umbra or the Underworld, incorporate this knowledge into their religious beliefs. When a Kinfolk dies, she does not immediately pass into her expected afterlife. Rather, she enters the Underworld, where all her shortcomings and wrongdoings are examined and purged from her, allowing her to achieve a state of being fit to enter her expected afterlife. Many Kinfolk believe that they must resolve any unfinished actions during this time as well, thus finding an explanation of "ghosts," as opposed to ancestor spirits.

Kinfolk Religions and Cults

While many Kinfolk follow a religious faith that corresponds to their cultural and ethnic background, others find their spiritual convictions in religious movements of their own. The knowledge that their Garou kin do pass beyond the borders of the material world and enter the spirit world goads Kinfolk into searching for a similar path for themselves, one that makes sense in the light of their existence as something just a tad bit more than human. Garou look on these Kinfolk movements with tolerance, for the most part; since what their Kin believe about the afterlife does not generally concern them. Examining some of the Kinfolk religions, however, might cause Garou some concern about the mindsets of those humans they consider as family.

While religious situations usually place a minor role, if any, in most **Werewolf** chronicles, Storytellers and players should consider using one of the Kinfolk religious groups listed below to design their own such group(s). Adding membership in a community that places additional demands on Kinfolk already burdened with the care and feeding of their Garou kin could create additional layers of meaning to a Kinfolk chronicle.

Buriers

A religious cult exists among the Bone Gnawer Kinfolk that draws its beliefs from ancient history. They believe, as did many ancient peoples, that you could take it with you. The tombs of the pharaohs and other important Egyptians, among other cultures, contained many possessions to enrich the afterlife of the tomb's inhabitant. Some Bone Gnawer Kin, since they usually lack material resources in life, believe in an afterlife that provides them with what they have missed. To this end, Buriers take to the streets on trash nights or hang around landfills to find objects (even broken ones) that they might like to have with them in the afterlife. At certain times during the year, a call goes out for the Buriers in a given area to unite at a certain spot, determined by a Kinfolk with the second sight. At this gathering, the stronger members dig a huge pit in the earth. The Buriers bring the items they have gathered to this meeting and, after labeling each item with the name of its owner, place their offerings in the pit. After some singing, dancing, and other festivities,

the Kinfolk who dug the pit close it up, burying the items until such time as the departed spirit of the Bone Gnawer Kinfolk might need them. By then, the items will be in good repair and ready for the Bone Gnawer Kin to enjoy a comfortable life after death.

Kinhome

The idea that after death, Kinfolk go to their Garou's tribal homeland in the Umbra makes sense to many Kin. For them, human religions do not explain their nature or offer them a convincing image of an afterlife. As Kinfolk, even if underappreciated or mistreated by their Garou kin, they know they have something that is lacking in the rest of humanity. What would a merely human religion have to offer them?

The hope is that when they die, Kinfolks' spirits go to the Umbral homeland set aside for their tribe. Some believe that, within that homeland, a "Kinhome" exists for Kinfolk. In that place, their service to the Garou ends and their spirits dwell in an eternal bliss. When Garou spirits or Garou traveling in spirit form seek to enter Kinhome, they enter at the pleasure and in the service of the Kinfolk spirits that dwell there. The thought that a place exists where the Garou defer to them holds a great deal of appeal to many Kinfolk.

Those who believe in Kinhome do not have weekly "church" services, but usually honor their beliefs within their homes or, occasionally, at "Kinhome moots," usually held near the solstices and equinoxes. These meetings do not take place on the solstice (or equinox) itself because the Garou hold their seasonal rites at those times and usually have some form of participation for their Kinfolk. Most believers do not speak of their beliefs to Garou, but they find satisfaction in thinking about a time when they do not have to take second place to their Changing kin.

Lunae

A small group of Kinfolk belong to the Luna Community. Called "Lunae," these Kinfolk believe that when they die, their spirits enter their tribal homeland where they undergo a test of their resolve, their dedication, and their bravery. Those Kinfolk who pass their test travel to an afterlife in the moon's realm, a place for Kinfolk only. Here they experience peace, clarity of vision, and, on the night of the full moon, a chance to return to Earth and visit family and friends (although these people may not be aware of the visitation). Some of the Children of Gaia find this an attractive view of the afterlife, as do a few Silver Fangs.



Reincarnates

The Reincarnates believe that Kinfolk who prove themselves in the eyes of Gaia and their tribal spirits reincarnate as one of the Garou when they die. Because of their affiliation with Eastern philosophies, many Stargazer Kinfolk fall into this category. While a few Kinfolk sects exist that have reincarnation as their center, such as the Reincarnate Kinfolk and the Kinfolk of the Wheel (or Wheelers), most Reincarnates don't belong to any organization. They simply live their lives in dedication to the Garou, learning as much as they can about their Changing kin in the process.

Callow Kinfolk

"Your Uncle Robert just got on a bus to Chicago one day, and that's the last we ever heard of him. He was a little strange, though. A real lone wolf."

— An old woman explains a bout her lost brother to her grandchildren.

Many Kinfolk grow up with the knowledge that their lives touch somehow upon the supernatural. Some know most of the details about their Garou kin and even about Garou in general. Others know only enough to keep them from running away whenever Uncle Henry has one of his strange fits and Mom sends all the kids out of the house, or when Mom has to go away for weeks without any explanation. However much or little these Kinfolk know about their Garou kin and the world as seen through the eyes of those who fight to protect Gaia, at least they know something.

Not all Kinfolk know what they are. For some Kinfolk, life simply takes strange turns every now and then. A string of bad luck may follow one family, as if someone or something has it in for them: tragedy strikes one family member after another within a short span of time; another family suddenly finds their world flipped bottom-side up when an otherwise secure job suddenly disappears. Still other families may get the sense that someone is stalking them, or that something sinister is out there and will come crashing down on them if they're not careful. Another family may only know that they have secrets in their background that seem to stymie attempts at tracking down their family history.

Callow Kinfolk are those Kinfolk who have fallen beyond the reach of the Garou. They have the potential to pass along the Garou gene — and, indeed, do pass along their blood through the generations — but they have no idea that they belong to the blood of werewolves. They live out their lives in seeming normalcy, although they may experience more than their share of unexplained circumstances due to some inherent attraction they offer to the supernatural world.

Look to the Past

Something in the past of a callow family happened to sever their connection to their Garou kin. When a hive of Black Spirals descends upon a sept of Bone Gnawers, catching them unaware and destroying them to the last wolf, the Kinfolk of those Gnawers often find themselves cut adrift from their connection to the Garou who knew of their existence. After they mourn the deaths of their Garou kin, if they ever discover what happened to them, that family or those families may simply disappear from the knowledge of the Garou unless they do something to perpetuate their connection. When something of that magnitude happens, however, a Kinfolk family may decide that flight is the better course of action. All of a sudden, they are without the Garou who both ruled their lives and served as buffers between them and the world of weirdness that the Garou represented. They might flee the area or even the country, leaving no trace of their whereabouts. A few generations pass, and the knowledge of their existence is lost.

Occasionally, children from callow families may experience the "imaginary playmate" syndrome with a difference: their playmate is real, a Kin Fetch still watching their family line with no Garou known to whom they can report. Sometimes, the Fetch will disappear from one child's life, when it becomes clear that the child is not a Garou-in-waiting.

At other times, callow Kinfolk may find their lives marked by tragedy. Stories of a family whose father goes berserk, killing all of the rest of the family and then either slaying himself or disappearing, may conceal a tale of a late and unanticipated First Change that goes terribly wrong. Tales of a wild animal roaming through a community periodically killing people or animals might constitute a Garou made mad by a Change she never expected and does not acknowledge.

Concerned family members may attempt to track down the source of a family curse or chain of mysteries. Sometimes they run up against a dead end, unable to make the leap across the border of what they can and can't believe.

From Callow to Kenning

The discovery that an individual belongs to a family of Kinfolk can make for an intriguing beginning (or end) to a Kinfolk chronicle. By having a group of players create characters that seem to be merely human (perhaps with some Numina to make them special), then leading them through a chronicle that allows them to discover their Kinfolk roots, a Storyteller can bring her players to the knowledge of just how far away from the mainstream world their Kinfolk characters have come when they do accept their heritage.

Using the concept of callow Kinfolk as a way to introduce characters to the life and times of Kinfolk in general, perhaps through the personal experience of their characters,

may imbue the world of Kinfolk with its own power and highlight the ability of using Kinfolk to tell compelling and memorable stories within the larger context of the world of the Changing Folk.

Stories can begin from any of the following scenario ideas:

- **The Legend of Mad Selena:** A family moves to a new house, one said to have belonged to their family at the turn of the last century. As they search the house during the process of settling in, they come across items that apparently belonged to these long-lost relatives. Finally, they come upon an album of pictures, or perhaps a diary belonging to a family member with a literary bent, who tells the story of “Mad Selena,” who had a fixation with the moon from the time she was a young girl, who dreamed of a strange, handsome man who would come down from the moon and take her away. The story of Selena might lead to the revelation that the family decided to lock her up to keep her from trying to realize her odd dream, only to find that she disappeared one night. By searching for more information, the characters may discover that something killed the remaining family during the night, with possibly one other survivor: the ancestor of one or more of the characters. Ultimately, they can track down the Silver Fang sept who claimed their sister Selene Moon-Caller from a family unwilling to let her follow her destiny.

- **Fire and Flood:** A group of Kinfolk characters travel to a community where flooding has left a community in ruins. As they attempt to help restore the community and heal the land left ruined by collapsed sewage pipes from a nearby factory, they find themselves drawn to a particular family. If they win the family’s trust (not hard to do since they are helping the community), they discover that a fire in the town hall a couple of generations ago destroyed most of the public records. Births, deaths, marriages, deeds, wills, and other documents were lost before they could be digitized. Other clues, perhaps attempts to harm the characters’ new friends, might lead to the discovery that some supernatural forces are out to neutralize the family. If the characters scratch the surface, they may uncover a line of Kinfolk lost since the fire – and uncover the creatures behind the attempt to eliminate them.

- **On the Run:** A seemingly normal family periodically packs up everything they can carry and moves somewhere else, changing their name, cutting all ties to their previous life, and starting over somewhere else. This fact comes to the attention of the Garou, who suspect that they may have stumbled upon a group of renegade Kinfolk. Because they do not want to waste too many Garou in chasing after them, they choose some reliable Kinfolk, with perhaps one or two Garou cubs to accompany them, to follow the family, discover what they have done to make them so twitchy, and deal with any problem that might arise. The family proves unusually good at spotting tails and runs the characters on

a merry chase until finally the mystery comes to light. The family is composed of callow Kin. Something, a long time ago, made a family head decide to run from the Garou. He told his children only the signs to watch for that might indicate the presence of “the watchers,” or “government spies,” or even “aliens.” When they saw the signs, they should run. Tracking down the Kinfolk’s tribe or finding a tribe to take them in might prove challenging. And if the family decides to keep running....

Lost and Found

The Garou realize that many of their Kinfolk families have fallen by the wayside, but not all tribes actively seek to track down their missing links. A number of factors contribute to the variety of responses to the knowledge that callow Kinfolk are “out there.”

- **Black Furies:** Some of the less numerous tribes, such as the Black Furies, realize the need to find their missing Kin but simply lack the numbers for an organized search. When they do discover a callow family, they act as quickly as possible to bring the family back into the fold. If a Kenning family lives near the callow one, the Furies enlist them in the recovery, gaining the confidence and friendship of family members before springing the truth on them. Otherwise, they send one of their own tribe as an ambassador to reunite them with their lost heritage.

- **Bone Gnawers:** Whenever a Bone Gnawer or one of their Kin picks up the scent of a callow family, regardless of their tribe, they act quickly and decisively. Since the tribe tends to absorb information of all kinds, news of callow Kinfolk seems to come to them as a matter of course, either through gossip passed along from their informants, or from one of their own noticing some of the signs of their presence. Their luck with discovering Lost Cubs in animal shelters occasionally leads them to lupus Kinfolk, a precious and highly prized acquisition for them. Normally, Bone Gnawers will notify other tribes if they find one of their lost Kinfolk families. Oddly, they tend to forget to inform other tribes of any lupus Kin they discover.

- **Children of Gaia:** The Children are one of the most diligent in pursuit of lost Kinfolk, often tracking down any reference they come across of odd happenings attached to a family, such as items that appear in tabloids and other alternative media sources. When they come across any callow Kinfolk, they are quick with their welcomes, although occasionally, their exuberance may evoke a negative reaction. They often disregard the callow family’s original tribe, caring more about adding more Kinfolk to the mix than making sure they get slotted into the right pigeonhole.

- **Fianna:** The Fianna always consider the discovery of one of their callow families a cause for celebration. They don’t, however, make a concerted effort as a tribe to find missing Kinfolk. Far more important to them is the

war against Gaia's enemies. The Fianna tend to leave such things like tracking down callow Kin to their Kinfolk. Some Fianna Kinfolk consider finding lost families a high priority; others tend to leave such things to chance, believing that the callow families might have lost their connection for a reason, such as an inability to maintain family ties or a weakness in the blood that caused no new Garou births to reaffirm the connection.

- **Get of Fenris:** A division exists within the Get regarding callow Kinfolk. Older, more traditional Garou tend to adhere to the idea of "survival of the fittest." They hold that callow families somehow brought their condition upon themselves, either through something they did or through something they omitted. They believe that callow Kinfolk have been culled from the Garou breeding pool. Younger Get feel that circumstances often conspire to cause a Kinfolk family to lose its connection and that it is their duty to Gaia to help them find their way home. Fortunately for callow families, they remain immune to the Delirium, since the Get's methods of informing callow Kin of their true heritage are seldom nuanced or subtle.

- **Glass Walkers:** The Glass Walkers regularly search the Internet in search for signs of missing Kinfolk. Taking advantage of social media sites, as well as sites dedicated to genealogy, the Glass Walkers follow any leads that seem to indicate that the poster might have Garou blood. They also follow up on police reports of wild animal appearances or other anomalies that might lead to the discovery of callow Kinfolk. While some Garou who support active searches for callow families may criticize the Walkers for not taking their searches to the streets more often, the Walkers believe their use of technology expedites their search and saves them from useless dead-ends.

- **Red Talons:** Occasionally, a Red Talon literally picks up the scent of a callow pack. When that happens, the entire Garou pack often tracks down their callow brothers and sisters. While some minor fighting to determine dominance of the callow pack sometimes occurs, it usually ends quickly, with the Red Talon Garou as the winner. Sometimes another tribe comes across a wolf pack that shows signs being callow Kinfolk. If the discovering tribe wants to score points with the Red Talons, they inform the Talons of their find. Otherwise, they increase their own font of lupus Kinfolk. A few Red Talons, who have taken on jobs as park rangers or wild life rehabilitators, make recovering callow Kinfolk a primary responsibility of theirs. The paucity of wolves, however, makes their searches generally fruitless.

- **Shadow Lords:** As with the Get of Fenris, the Shadow Lords' emphasis on success and their inherent contempt for failures often get in the way of their search for callow Kinfolk. Where they can find proof that the family's connection to their tribe occurred with no fault to the family, they put

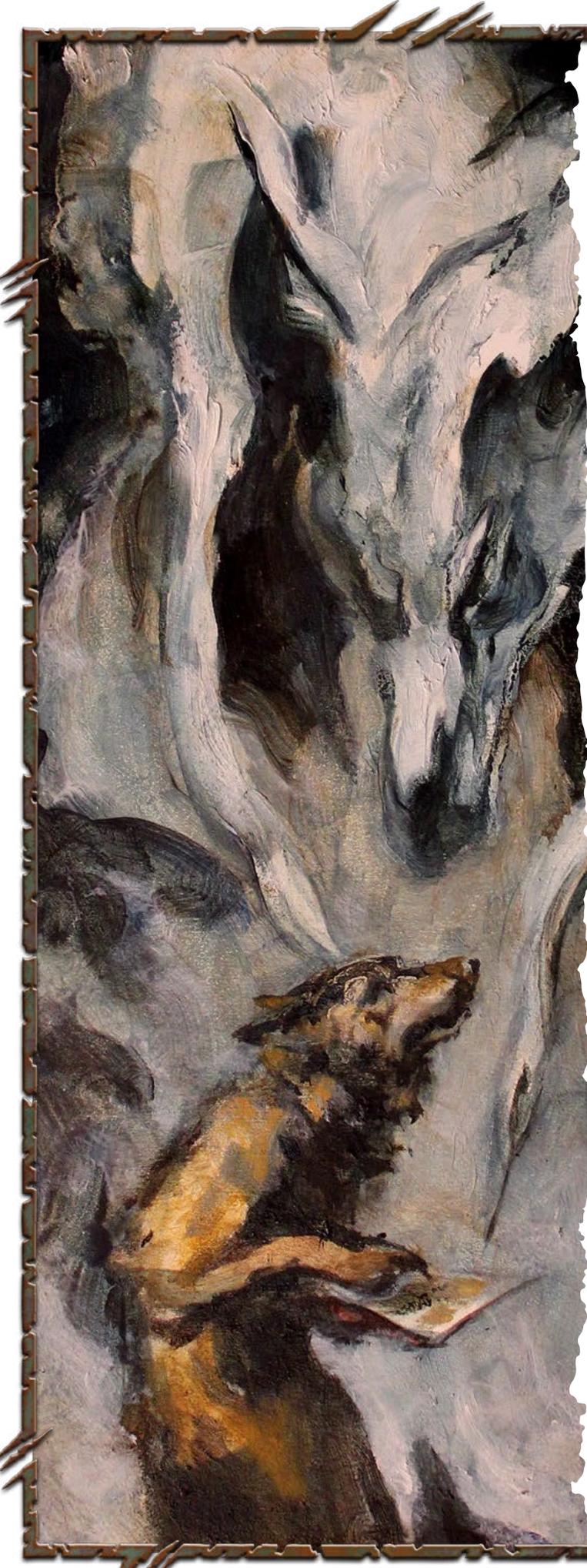
forth considerable effort to reclaim their lost Kinfolk. If, however, the callow family proves itself unworthy by Shadow Lords' standards, they allow them to remain ignorant, or, if necessary, neutralize any threat they might present to the community of Garou.

- **Silent Striders:** Among the Garou most likely to have Kinfolk lose track of them, the Silent Striders make up for it by assiduously trying to track down any rumors of lost Kin. The tribe's nomadic life style puts them in the way of rumors, tall tales, and other transient forms of communication, so they often have a leg up on searches for callow Kinfolk. Once a callow family comes within their radar, they quickly seek them out and attempt to unite them with existing Kinfolk families, sometimes remaining with them until they have a chance to adjust or until their wanderlust compels them onward.

- **Silver Fangs:** The extensive research that goes into keeping track of the Silver Fang bloodlines ensures that, of all the Garou tribes, they have the fewest callow Kinfolk (if unknown quantities can be counted). When any hint of a callow Silver Fang family appears on the horizon, the Silver Fangs send out a group of Garou and Kinfolk to locate the family and confirm, or deny, the accuracy of the report. Some Garou, however, don't put it past some Silver Fang to accidentally lose information that might lead to the discovery of a long lost family, particularly if the family might be too "common" for Silver Fang lineage. In that, the Fangs resemble the Shadow Lords. When they put their minds to it, however, few can beat the Silver Fangs for thoroughness in locating lost Kinfolk.

- **Stargazers:** These reclusive Garou are so few in number, particularly those who remain in the western world, that they keep close track of their Kinfolk despite their penchant for keeping them at arm's length. When the Stargazers receive news of a lost family, they take decisive, though not always obvious, action to find the family and make sure it ends up with the correct tribe. While they attempt to treat any discoveries with equanimity, they find it hard to deny the true joy they feel at reclaiming one of their own.

- **Uktena:** The wide dispersals of American Indian tribes have contributed to significant severed connections between Kinfolk and the Uktena. The tribe follows any signs of the existence of a callow Uktena family with great urgency. One of the instances where inter-tribal cooperation occurs without much fuss, Uktena both give and accept help locating callow families. They believe that the other tribes owe them assistance in tracking down their own lost Kin; likewise, they hold themselves accountable to other tribes when finding one of their Kin. The Uktena put the same effort in finding callow families from their more recent members' ethnic groups as they do for original Uktena Kin who have lost their way.



• **Wendigo:** Like the Get of Fenris and a few other tribes, the Wendigo waver between jumping to answer the call of a lost callow family and deciding that a family who loses its connection to Gaia's warriors does not possess the strength to fight on Her behalf. For the most part, however, the Wendigo hope that they can increase their small numbers through finding and, in some instances, "adopting" callow Kinfolk.

The Other Side

What happens to a family that has gone on for generations in the conviction that they were "normal" people, when they suddenly realize that they have werewolf (or other Changing Folk) blood in their veins? How do callow Kinfolk react to their transformation into Kenning families?

Since callow families are Kinfolk, they do not suffer from the Delirium when a Garou changes into his war-form. For some callow families, this visual affirmation that the supernatural exists and that they are part of it comes as a welcome surprise. In many cases, the discovery answers questions that have long plagued the callow family, such as why they might not mind dreams of shape-changing, or why they have an inexplicable aversion to silver.

Sometimes, callow families need some persuasion before they accept that their lives will never be the same. The Children of Gaia, in particular, have counselors to ease the transition, and they will lend them out to other tribes when necessary.

Some callow families, however, never accept their new status, particularly if one of their members witnesses a Garou change form by accident, often from being in the wrong place at the wrong time. While a callow Kinfolk may not suffer from the Delirium, acceptance of the Garou and of their own heritage is not a given. One family of callow Kinfolk not only refused to acknowledge what they were, but they decided that they had received the "call" to become hunters of supernatural creatures. Their immunity to the Delirium makes them particularly dangerous to the Garou.

The Bottom Line

The Garou know they engage in a day-to-day fight against the forces that would bring harm to Gaia and to Her creation. To this end, most of the Garou do whatever they can to return callow Kinfolk to their intended tribes. They realize too keenly that the Black Spiral Dancers grab up any "loose" Kinfolk they find, and that even Kinfolk with severe problems don't deserve becoming slaves of the Dancers.

While some Garou wait until a Fetch suddenly alerts them to the birth of a Garou into a family that had long been lost, most either follow any credible report that might lead to recovering a callow family or else search proactively for indications of the existence of such. The Silver Fangs boast of at least one of their Kinfolk who runs a private

TESTING THE WATERS

All Garou tribes know of the existence of callow Kin. While the Scent of the True Form Gift and similar spirit aid can identify a Kinfolk as such, not every Garou pack has a member who knows this Gift or has access to similar “true-seeing” secrets. Outside of such a Gift, fetish, or what have you, the most reliable test available to determine whether a person or family is Kinfolk is to expose them to a Crinos-form Garou. Kinfolk, even callow ones, will not fall to the Delirium. This could, however, cause issues. A family that isn’t Kin, however, will fall prey to the madness of seeing a Garou in Crinos form, and may cause harm to themselves or go flying to the police, the media, or their local shrink. The Garou must somehow find a way to help make sure the family has no long-term memories of the experience.

In order to minimize problems, most Garou will adopt other ways to predict whether or not the final test will have the desired result: the discovery of a lost family of Kinfolk.

Some of these methods include conducting extensive conversations with family members to get an idea of their hypothetical reactions to seeing a werewolf; engaging them in a verbal game of “what if?”; asking them about family history involving supernatural occurrences; testing them for allergies to silver; or summoning spirits to test for the presence of Gnosis or the ability to do hedge magic; or actually exposing them to some other form of supernatural creature, such as a ghost, to gauge their reactions.

A Garou can try to question spirits on the matter, using the Rite of Discovery (see below).

If all the signs are encouraging, the final step involves having the family, either separately or together, witness a Garou change into her Crinos form.

RITE OF DISCOVERY

Level One

This rite enables a Garou to question a spirit who might be able to identify a callow family as probable Kinfolk. If the spirit is an ancestor spirit, the Garou may query it as to whether the callow family sparks any memories of a time when their ancestors were recognized as Kinfolk. (The spirit will need to be able to witness the alleged Kin in question, or be exposed to photographs and/or one or two of their close personal items.)

Alternately, the Garou can question spirits in the area where the family lives to find out if they know of any signs that may indicate whether or not the subject family might be Kinfolk.

System: The Garou spends a point of Gnosis and begins questioning the proper spirit (who must first be encountered or summoned by other means). After offering the appropriate chiminage to gain the spirit’s favor, the Garou asks the spirit a series of questions geared toward discovering the true nature of the family in question. Note that with this rite, the Garou does not need to understand Spirit Speech – its purpose is to allow nearly any Garou to find answers to the question of a given callow family’s possible identity. The spirit will answer either “yes” or “no” through some visible means. Its answer is not definitive – it simply means that the ancestor spirit either does or does not recognize the family, or the local spirit thinks they are or are not weird enough to be connected to the Garou somehow.

detective agency specializing in “missing persons.” Other Garou call upon existing groups, such as the Black Eagles (see p. 27), to take on a recovery operation.

Once upon a time, some Garou Philodox, Theurges, and Galliards met to discuss why the recovery of callow Kinfolk was not a part of the Litany. After much searching for answers, including questioning spirits and conducting rituals to uncover the answer, they reached a decision that,

while not entirely satisfactory, nevertheless gave a reason they could accept for this important lapse. When the Litany came to the Garou, the world was a smaller place, and most people knew their place in the scheme of things, even if they were unhappy with it. Callow families, in the beginning, did not exist. When war came to the Changing Folk, families of all the Changing Breeds bore the wounds. The wound the callow Kinfolk represent exists to this day.



Chapter Two: Whelps of Other Breeds

Fera Kin *Ajaba*

Historically, the Ajaba had strong relations with both their hyena and human Kinfolk. Whether dwelling in packs or living in tribal configurations, family ties and group identities were an important part of Ajaba culture. The vast majority of Kinfolk were kenneing, participating fully alongside their shapeshifting relatives in both the mundane and supernatural challenges that faced their families. Strong Kinfolk were as valued as Ajaba themselves, as hunters and providers, sages and storytellers, counselors, diplomats, and healers. Tribal and family identity was more important than whether a particular individual could shapeshift or not. An Ajaba would definitely consider himself more similar and closely tied to a Kinfolk of his lineage, be they hyena or human, than to another werehyena of a different village or pack.

All of that changed with the near-annihilation of the Ajaba and their Kinfolk by Black Tooth and the Endless Storm. With nearly every able-bodied Ajaba killed and those few survivors driven away from their territories, centuries of

tradition and custom were lost in a single night. The Ajaba who survived have been forced to take mates and make children (or cubs) wherever they can in a desperate attempt to keep themselves from being driven to extinction.

This new generation of mates is, for the most part, callow. Chosen by desperate survivors seeking any opportunity to pass along their genetic legacies, many of the new breeding stock are completely unaware that the supernatural world exists. The chances of an Ajaba breeding true and creating a shapeshifter through a union with a non-Kinfolk mate is slim. Recognizing this, most Ajaba simply do their best to breed as often as possible, hoping to create the first in a generation of Kinfolk who may serve as more prolific partners to Ajaba mates in the future.

Desperate times have led to desperate measures. Ajaba once kept careful oral accounting of their lineages, culled their weak, and prided themselves on the strength of their family lines. Now, every drop of Ajaba blood, be it in a shapeshifter or Kinfolk, is considered precious, and their young, sick, lame, or mentally unstable are protected and nurtured in hopes that they can add something - anything - to the nearly-destroyed Breed. Some Ajaba have attempted even more untraditional and rash efforts to renew their numbers,

taking mates from among other Changing Breeds' Kinfolk in hopes that their offspring might breed true at a higher rate than with non-Kinfolk stock. As can well be imagined, this has not earned them a strong welcome among the other Changing Breeds.

As for the Kinfolk left behind after Black Tooth's massacre, life has been as hard on them as on their shapeshifting relatives. Many fled their traditional lands, hoping to reunite with their scattered families. Some were successful in finding their own families, or other displaced Ajaba and Kin who were more than happy to overlook former rivalries in a desperate hope of salvaging something of their destroyed culture.

Others clung desperately to the villages and hunting grounds of their tribes and packs, hoping against hope that their kin were not among those slain by the Bastet on that ill-fated night. Sadly, Black Tooth and his followers were ruthless in their dedication to their task, following the battle proper with a cleanup effort that wiped out almost every Kinfolk villager left behind.

Ananasi

No Changing Breed is as utterly emotionless as the Ananasi, and so it is of little surprise that werespiders' relationships with their Kinfolk are based on other factors. That does not mean, however, that those relationships are weaker or even less favorable to the Kin than among their Ovid cousins. While Grandmother Spider's shapeshifters may not feel romantic love, nor familial affection for their Kinfolk, neither are they prone to the egotistical pride or Rage-driven fury that plagues many shapeshifters' relationships with their Kin. There is little room or reason for cruelty or abuse among the cold and logical duty of the Ananasi, and that, in many ways, is more than other Changing Breeds can claim.

No animal Kinfolk are as prolific or ubiquitous as those of the Ananasi. There are more than fifty thousand species of spiders, and arachnids outnumber humans by a factor of several thousand. Native to every continent other than Antarctica, they share territory with humanity wherever it is found. They are unique in their ability to pass unnoticed and unbothered through human territories in their animal form without causing the slightest suspicion; even a raven or housecat found in a house or place of business is likely to cause more stir than a single spider (other than to arachnophobes, of course).

While a Kinfolk spider has no real intellect, they also have no real willpower. Once directed, they will complete their task, or die trying, without the majority of the self-preservation instinct so challenging to overcome in higher animals. The combination of these two factors makes spider Kinfolk invaluable to the Ananasi. Their sheer numbers and survivability ensure that, even if homid Ananasi were to be

annihilated, the Breed would continue to serve Grandmother Spider's purposes. Additionally, no animal species serves nearly as invisibly as spies, infiltrators, and thieves as do the arachnids to their Ananasi relatives.

When it comes to their human Kinfolk, the Ananasi make efficient use of them, too. While the Changing Breeds' emotions are left behind before their First Change, meaning that there is little in the way of love between an Anansi and their Kinfolk mate or children, they still recognize the inherent value of their human Kinfolk. Grandmother Spider's work is far too important to allow their Breed to die out, and so future generations must be ensured.

As well, while many Ananasi prefer solitary lives by nature, they still have need of other humans, if for no other reason than to create the illusion that they are still human themselves. And yet, their arachnoid nature presents challenges at keeping mundane minions close enough to present a proper façade. When the Ananasi must allow someone into their proverbial parlor, kenning Kinfolk are much less likely to question their sanguine tastes than even the most well-paid employee.

Bastet

Due to their independent natures, the Bastet's relations with their Kinfolk also tends to be individual, rather than defined by their Breed or tribe. That is not to say that they are not a vital part of a Bastet's existence - quite the opposite. Without a sept-like structure, Kinfolk provide most of the deep social connection and support for Bastet, and an individual Bastet's ties to their family lines may well be the most important connections they have.

Bagheera

Among the Bastet, the Bagheera are the most closely connected on a day-to-day basis with their Kinfolk and each other. They communicate regularly with their own kind and their Kin, and were once global explorers, traveling the world as individuals or in small family groups to discover truth wherever it might be found.

In recent generations, the Bagheera's home territories, and both human and feline Kinfolk, have fallen victim to predation by industrial encroachment, spurring the wereleopards to withdraw back to their native lands and focus on healing and reclamation there. This willingness to sacrifice personal motivations for their people's greater good is characteristic of the Bagheera's relationship with their Kinfolk. Whether human or feline, Bagheera Kin are valued, respected, protected-where-possible, and treated as part of an inclusive community, rather than seen as separate and lesser than their shapeshifting relatives.

Bagheera highly value wisdom and justice; their most favored Kinfolk are those who can offer advice - be it spiri-

tual or practical wisdom – to help ensure the Bagheera take rightful actions and make sage decisions. However, they are also capable of great violence in the cause of what is right. Kinfolk, whether they walk on two feet or four, who fight ferociously when there is need, are highly valued as well.

Balam

The jungles and depths of Central America are a harsh environment for survival. Danger lurks around every corner, both natural and artificial. For centuries the lush resources of the Balam's home territories have attracted those who would strip them for their own profits, destroying anything – or anyone – that stood in their way.

The Balam do not take kindly to this violation. Together with their Kinfolk, they fight fiercely to slow the ever-encroaching line of invasion upon their pristine lands. When it comes to battle, ferocity, not the ability to shapeshift, is the deciding factor, and Balam are proud to fight alongside their Kinfolk family members.

It is not enough for the Balam to survive, however; they are driven to recover what has been lost to the predations of the past. When seeking secrets, many eyes – and many paths walked – are better than few. Because of this, the Balam actively cultivate connections with their human Kinfolk, educating them on the types of clues that might lead to discoveries of lost or stolen knowledge.

Despite their ferocity, Balam love as avidly as they hate. When a Balam takes a Kinfolk mate, they and their offspring are protected and treasured as the center of the werejaguar's life. A Balam will not hesitate to fight and kill another of their kind who attempts to encroach on their territory, and nothing but death will satisfy a werejaguar whose mate or children have been harmed or stolen.

Bubasti

Even the Silver Fangs cannot rival the painstaking and obsessive focus on lineage maintained by the Bubasti. The khepur elders of the tribe maintain complete records on all Kinfolk born to Bubasti (feline or human) back to before the times of the great dynasties, carefully arranging appropriate unions to ensure the limited breeding pool remains as pure as possible without sacrificing strength or viability.

As the kyphur cats of the Bubasti's original lineage are no longer available as breeding stock (see *Kyphur Cats and Kindred*, p. 54), the elders have attempted somewhat successfully to introduce similar species as surrogate feline Kinfolk for their tribe. These servals, golden cats, and caracals are carefully groomed and selectively bred to attempt to recreate the glory of the former kyphur. As Kinfolk, they are considered inferior to the original kyphur, but preferable to allowing the feline branch of the Bubasti to die out entirely.

The purest among the Bubasti human Kinfolk are treated as royalty, pampered and protected. More distantly related

Kinfolk work hard to provide their Kin (shapeshifting or not) with all of the necessities and luxuries expected of near-gods, as they have for centuries. Modern times are beginning to undercut this devotion slightly, but the khepur will use any means available to them – mundane or supernatural – to maintain the status quo that has served their tribe for generation upon generation.

Ceilican

The tricky fairy cats are a conundrum, even to themselves. While all Bastet may face difficulties in tracking their Kinfolk due to their tendency to walk alone rather than in packs, the Ceilican's annual persona changes take that challenge to a near impossible level.

Feline Kinfolk to the Ceilican are rumored to be found among the Scottish wildcats, although the felines' numbers are so low as to make them nearly unsustainable as breeding stock. Some Ceilican claim their feline Kin are actually all long extinct, and that all Ceilican and their extant Kinfolk are human-born, but how far can the word of a creature that changes its identity on a yearly basis be trusted?

Most Ceilican Kinfolk are callow in modern times; the reality of their nature stretches the boundaries of belief even for those who are bonded by blood to the fae cats. Those few Ceilican Kinfolk who are kenning know better than to expect their mercurial lovers to have a regular place in their lives. At best, the passionate whirlwind they fall in love with in their youth may cycle through as several different personalities over the course of a lifetime. The heart knows more than the eye can see, however, and the person they feel they've known forever, even though they just met, might well be their Ceilican partner from years in the past.

Most contact and matchmaking takes place on Samhain, at their annual revel on the moors, where a whispered word or well-placed rumor about a Ceilican Kinfolk in need of companionship may well make it to an accommodating ear.

Khan

Strong Kinfolk are a point of pride among the Khan, and strong relationships with their Kinfolk are just as important. Whether human or feline, Khan Kinfolk are expected to be physically tough, aesthetically beautiful, have powerful personalities, and to know their place, both in relation to their shapeshifting relatives and within their pecking order amongst other Kinfolk.

Feline Khan Kinfolk hold their own territories, interacting with Khan and each other predominantly only for mating. Sometimes, however, in the case of a successful kill too large for the hunter to consume, nearby relatives are allowed to partake, so long as they show proper respect for the individual providing their meal. It is a point of pride to the Khan if their Kinfolk is the one who has proven their prowess in this way that they can provide such a banquet.



Similar traditions are reflected amongst the Khan's relations with their human Kinfolk. While the Khan's attentions are likely to be distant at most times, when they are focused on a Kinfolk they are passionate, intense, and utterly genuine. Khan take pride in sharing the fruits of their success with their Kin, and even greater pride when their Kinfolk succeed to the point where they can reciprocate that generosity on their own.

Pumonca

The most solitary of the Bastet, Pumonca hardly maintain contact or relationships with other werecougars, let alone having much interaction with their Kinfolk as a whole. As such, they are the most likely to take mates from among non-Kinfolk, simply because it's statistically unlikely that they know other Pumonca or their family lines from which to choose a partner.

This is not to say, however, that Pumonca Kinfolk don't exist. An individual homid Pumonca may well have a mate to whom they are devoted; someone who can keep pace with their simple, isolated lifestyle, and may even have children with that partner. Even if this is a life-long pairing, however, their offspring are unlikely to grow up and encounter other Pumonca. Having a love of the outdoors and a need for solitary exploration inspired by a Pumonca parent is far more

likely to eventually result in a Pumonca Kinfolk finding a Pumonca mate than the social networking or matchmaking that is common to other Breeds.

Among feline Pumonca, however, their likelihood of finding a Kinfolk among the native cougar population is fairly high. A narrow breeding pool, nomadic nature, and awareness of the need for continued breeding, combined with a lack of long-term familial units means that many of the cougars alive today have a Pumonca ancestor somewhere in their past few generations. The challenge, for these werecats, is simply finding mates, with the large territories, dwindling population, and solitary nature of the cats themselves. With the declaration of extinction of the Florida panther, those whose traditional mates came from the Eastern panther population have been forced to seek other territories (or resign themselves to a potentially fruitless quest to find those few feline Kinfolk still surviving undetected by humans.)

Qualmi

Qualmi are a curiosity, even among the Bastet. Like their Pumonca cousins, they are solitary nomads by nature, although much more social. However, while they enjoy interacting with others greatly (in small doses), their travels and customs make it very difficult to form traditional relationships with their Kinfolk. Feline Qualmi spend a

great deal of their time simply scouting the wilderness for potential mates, especially in the traditional late-winter breeding season. After conception, however, it is back to their solitary lifestyle, although females will remain with their kits for nearly a year to protect and train them enough to survive in the wild.

Homid Qualmi tend to form very here-and-gone relationships with their Kinfolk. While their wandering ways result in a lot of offspring being raised by relatives, or dealing with absentee parents, the werelynx also have a quixotic charm about them that frequently lets them get away with this behavior while still being considered “a great guy” or “an awesome gal.” When they do return to check in on their Kinfolk, they are usually welcomed back with open arms, inspiring that “pick up where we left off” connection, whether it’s been a few months or many years since they’ve seen their Kin.

Simba

Simba are unique amongst the Bastet, in that they do intrinsically form social groupings with others of their tribe. Unlike many shapeshifter “packs,” however these “prides” inherently include Kinfolk, as they represent both cooperative working/hunting units *and* breeding/family pools.

The structure of these prides can be incredibly complex, but usually consists of between one and three Simba, their respective mates, and very young offspring. For homids, this may form a small village, or an extended family unit, while for feline prides, the pride may appear from the outside to be simply a successful and efficient lion pride.

Tradition and pride in one’s culture are both very important to the Simba. Because of this, within the pride, traditional gender roles are most often upheld, even when it means the Simba appears to take what might be seen as a “lesser” role to their Kinfolk. A female feline Simba may guide her pride, using her advanced intellect and sentience to aid their survival, but she is likely to still hunt beside her female Kinfolk companions to feed the males (even the Kinfolk). Likewise, if tribal structure for a human village has traditionally had female leaders or counselors, a male homid Simba is likely to work within that structure, even if it means supporting the pride in ways that might seem subservient to outsiders to the culture.

Woe be it, however to those who might mistake this honoring of tradition for weakness; no Simba or Kinfolk will take an insult lightly. Those who treat a Simba poorly for respecting traditional roles with their Kinfolk will quickly find that there are no traditions to protect outsiders from a werelion’s wrath.

Swara

While the Pumonca and Qualmi are solitary in no small part because of their nomadic natures, they do form deep

and intimate relationships when they bond with Kinfolk, the Swara are slow to trust, and by nature very private, even to the extent of xenophobia with outsiders. These traits directly manifest in their relationships with their Kinfolk, both human and feline, which are very deep, but also include a strong tradition of personal space, both literal and metaphoric.

Female feline Swara, be they Kinfolk or shapeshifters, tend to live alone, in home ranges that sometimes overlap with those of other female cheetah. Other than mating season, and a few months after giving birth where they train and protect their offspring, they prefer a solitary existence.

Male feline Swara, on the other hand, often form small packs which may include Kinfolk as equals. Whether alone or with others, their territories often overlap those of several females, allowing them to form relationships and mate with a variety of appropriate partners.

While having separate territories and living apart may seem distant and cold to outsiders, the Swara and their Kinfolk will hold the same territories year after year, often returning to the same several mates for subsequent litters. The relationships built are long-lasting, and vital to the Swara, and the distance and separation involved ensures that the individuals’ need for privacy is a respected part of the relationship configuration.

Homid Swara often find similar relationship boundaries suit their natures. A Swara may have several committed partners, while retaining their own home, or live in an extended family with separate sleeping and living quarters for each. Regardless of the details, they are likely to be very private about the inner workings of their family life, especially where outsiders are concerned.

Corax

For many of the Changing Breeds, Kinfolk are not just non-shapeshifting relatives. They are potential shapeshifters awaiting some random circumstance to reveal their true natures, as well as the most likely conduit through which a shapeshifter’s supernatural legacy may reveal itself. These dual aspects influence how the Changing Breeds view and interact with their Kinfolk, in some cases defining the very nature of Kin-shifter relationships.

Every Garou Kinfolk has the potential of going through their First Change. While most who will do so change during puberty (or whatever their species’ equivalent is), even an elderly Kinfolk has a chance of becoming a full Garou at any point during their lifetime, and the same is true for Bastet, Gurahl, and the like. These Breeds do their best to keep close track of every member of their lineages, using Kin-fetches and mundane surveillance to ensure these potential shifters are not lost. They’re also likely to educate their Kin on the nature of what they may become, creating a

culture of Kenning Kinfolk aware of their supernatural ties.

As well, when shapeshifters randomly develop from a small percentage of Kinfolk stock, the number of true changers can only be increased through factors like prolific or selective breeding. This creates a cultural value in those Kinfolk who prove themselves as more likely to “throw” shapeshifting offspring, but also narrows the perceived value of Kinfolk in general to that of breeding stock. If producing shapeshifting offspring is both desirable *and* random, the best way to stack the odds is to reward prolific and successful production of offspring, and it’s a very small step from there to viewing that production as a core component – even the only factor – in an individual’s worth.

This is not true of the Corax, however. Without the Rite of the Spirit Egg being performed, no Corax Kinfolk develops into a full wereraven, meaning that Kinfolk are not inherently looked at as latent Corax and that the line between Kinfolk and Corax is greater without this random potential.

As well, the odds of a shapeshifter being born into a given genetic line cannot be stacked by fecundity, or prolificacy, or the spiritual virility of their ancestors, taking the aspect of Kinfolk as breeding stock selectively chosen for their chances of “throwing” a shapeshifter out of the cultural paradigm.

Because of these two factors, Kinfolk merit has nothing to do with how likely they are to produce Corax offspring or spontaneously become Corax themselves, and everything to do with their own personal attributes, skills, dedication, and potential. Corax are less likely to feel superior about how many wereravens are a part of their family line, and more likely to take pride in the individual merits of those they are related to. Kinfolk themselves are differently motivated towards assisting the Corax as well. If the only way to “earn” one’s wings is to be seen as wise and worthy, Kinfolk are more likely to dedicate themselves to their duty than those whose “promotion” is a random mystery.

BREEDISM

In order to be a Corax, a Corax of the opposite breed as the Kinfolk must deem them worthy of the honor of carrying a Spirit Egg. Homid Corax who hope for their progeny to be honored with the Rite are more likely to retain good relations with their raven-born brethren, and vice versa.

Over the centuries, this has created a culture with less breedism than most Changing Breeds have developed. There is little room for human- or raven-centric views when such traits tend to be inherently bred out of the changing population.

WHEN IS A KINFOLK NOT A KINFOLK?

While it is unusual, it is possible for the Rite of the Spirit Egg to be performed upon an individual who is not Kinfolk to the Corax as well. Technically, all that is required is a willing subject, a capable benefactor (corvid Corax for humans, or homid for ravens) with the Rite, and the ability to take the target into the Umbra.

Some believe this to be the highest honor a Corax can bestow upon someone not genetically related to the wereravens. Others believe that to do so is a blasphemy, an act of unforgivable insult to Helios.

What is universally held, however, is that such an act is taboo to perform upon anyone who is not fully raven or human. The cautionary tales against what could happen if such a Rite were attempted upon other Breeds’ Kinfolk or other supernatural creatures are enough to dissuade even the most curious of Corax.

In many ways, the Rite of the Spirit Egg removes the pressure that most breeds place upon their Kinfolk mates and offspring. No spouse or child of a Corax will be that wereraven’s supernatural progeny, which means that as a culture, the Corax have not developed an attitude towards their Kinfolk as extensions of their own spiritual virility. Since the power to transform a Kinfolk into a Corax is inherently not available to their own relatives, while a Corax may be proud that their Kin are chosen for the Rite, they aren’t prone to “owning” their Kinfolks’ worthiness in the same way many other Breeds develop. This has allowed the wereravens to develop a different paradigm with their Kin than other Changing Breeds, and many Corax believe that their relationships with Kin are inherently more genuine because of it. With the posterity issue out of the way, they are able to have real relationships with their mates and children, based on emotion and affection, rather than built out of duty and responsibility.

Gurahl

For centuries after the War of Rage, Gurahl society on Earth consisted entirely of their Kinfolk and a single representative of the werebears. In that time, much of the Kinfolk blood thinned, and with it, generation after gener-

ation, stories of the Kinfolk's role as valued helpers, beloved mates, and wise advisors to the Gurahl slowly transformed from instructive lessons to legends and mythology. When the Gurahl returned to protect their remaining kin from the Storm Eater, it was a wakeup call for shapeshifter and Kinfolk alike. Like long-separated lovers, Kinfolk and Gurahl had to rediscover one another and reshape their relationship to suit what each had become over the time they were apart.

Luckily for them, and for the world at large, the bond between the Gurahl and their Kin ran stronger and deeper than the divide which had separated them for so long.

Ursine Kinfolk took most easily to the reintegration; unlike human Kinfolk, their animal instincts were never muddled by the belief that the Gurahl were myths or legends. Their animal intellect had not formulated any reasoning for the Gurahl's disappearance, and so their return was simply a return to the natural way of things.

The Gurahl, however, were taken aback by how cruelly their animal kind had been treated in their absence, mourning the extinction of their Kin in California, and Mexico, in Africa, and several species in Alaska. Of those who remained, so few were left, and the Gurahl were angered at the world that had thinned their Kin's numbers so greatly. Many felt great shame that their time of hibernation had left their animal relatives so vulnerable to man's predation, and dedicated themselves to their preservation and protection, even if they themselves were human-born.

Reconnecting with the Gurahl's human Kin was a more difficult matter. Unlike their ursine cousins, several centuries including the influx of Europeans to North America, had scattered the Gurahl's native Kinfolk to the four winds. Some remained on traditional tribal lands, although their way of life had become unrecognizable to the returning bearshifters. Others had integrated with European society entirely, leaving behind traditional ways and turning their back on the truth of their role as Kinfolk. The Gurahl did what they could to re-educate those who seemed able and willing to understand that the tales which had become children's stories or were found only in books on folklore were not fanciful entertainment, but a solemn account of duty to a power much bigger than the Kinfolk or even the Gurahl themselves.

And, where the Gurahl found no Kinfolk remaining – where government relocation, European-introduced disease, war, famine, or the Wyrms' intercession had wiped the Gurahl's people from existence – the bears began anew. They sought out those, regardless of their ancestry, whose hearts and spirits beat in time with the traditional ways of the Gurahl and their lost Kinfolk. They taught the traditional stories, and watched to see which eyes sparked with interest, who sought to see the turning of the seasons, which of the new generation might hold the potential to create the next

generation of Kinfolk. They spent time in their traditional lands, speaking about conservation and recovery, about respecting the centuries-old methods of working with, rather than against the land. And they watched to see who truly listened, who took action, who sought for more.

Over time, they took new mates from among these folks – the dreamers, the protectors, the doers. They treasured them, knowing full well what it was like to do without their Kin for so very long. They had children together, and raised that new generation with an awareness of the old ways, knowledge of the new, and challenged them with how to integrate the two to heal the damage that the Gurahl's absence had brought about.

Kitsune

There is no love more bittersweet than that of a Kitsune for his Kinfolk – save, perhaps, that of a Kinfolk for her Kitsune. Steeped in the poignant (and complicated) romantic ritualism of the Asian cultures in which they evolved, Kitsune courtship is a graceful dance of charm and wit, half-hidden between lowered eyelids and fluttering fans. However, for all its beauty, there is a pain inherent in these pairings. The Kitsune and their Kin are cursed to suffer in the creation of a child together. The labor pains of a Kitsune-Kinfolk birth are so great that they strike both parents equally, wracking the father with torturous cramps and bone-wreaking spasms just as strongly as the mother.

Should the fruit of their union be true Kitsune (rather than a Kinfolk), the experience is even more painful. When a Kitsune is born; someone *will* die. Often, the price is paid by the Kinfolk, whose body and spirit have less resilience than that of their werefox mate. If both the Kitsune and Kinfolk survive, which is rare, the curse will strike another family member or friend (often Kinfolk themselves) – the price must be paid.

For some Breeds, knowing that their mates have a high chance of dying in childbirth would distance them from their Kin. It might, in some, discourage the shapeshifter from becoming attached to their mate, knowing that there is a high chance of losing them in this manner.

However, this pain and potential loss makes the Kinfolk even more precious to their fox-shifting relatives. The concept of “wabi-sabi” – beauty defined through imperfection and impermanence – is key to many of the human cultures related to the Kitsune, and recognized by the Kitsune themselves. As the Silver Lady's artful destroyers, they know that nothing can – or should – last forever. All that is precious will one day fade, the brevity of its beauty adds to, rather than diminishes, its worth.

Not all Kinfolk, of course, are lovers and mates to the Kitsune. Like all Breeds, Kinfolk are also teachers and advisors, bodyguards and crafters, spies and servants for

the Changing Breed. Each of these roles carries with it its own respect, its own value, its own place in the carefully arranged pattern that is Kitsune culture. Ever mindful of their vow to Gaia (and the reward promised to them at the end of this Age, should they faithfully fulfill it) the Kitsune are superlatively dedicated to their causes, and expect no less than the same from their Kinfolk. When those roles are properly fulfilled, and the goals smoothly worked towards, the Kitsune will do everything within their power to aid and support their Kinfolk in all endeavors. If, however, a Kinfolk slacks in their duties, is untrustworthy, or worse yet, *lies* to the Kitsune? They quickly learn why the Silver Lady was willing to entrust bringing down entire kingdoms to her cunning, canny, ruthless little werefoxes.

Mokole

Unlike other Changing Breeds, the Mokolé remember a time before they had human Kinfolk. In the days of the Lizard Kings, during the height of the Mokolé reign, humans were little more than proto-apes. Many Mokolé believe that the Lizard Kings' attentions (others would use terms such as enslavement and rape) are what gave these early proto-humans the boost they needed to eventually attain true sentience themselves.

Regardless of whether these memories (which are contradicted by modern scientific research) are accurate or not, they are still Truth to the Mokole. The weresaurians still view humanity (including their own Kinfolk) as little more than children playing at ruling over a domain they have no true capability to understand. The Mokolé *remember* what it means to truly rule, to make the Earth tremble under your every foot step and its inhabitants soil themselves in fear at the sound of your roar. They remember; and they resent.

It was Kinfolk who survived, lizard and proto-human both, evolving for millions of years after the Wonder Work destroyed every one of the Lizard Kings. And through that elusive supernatural genetic chain, it was to Kinfolk that the first of the new Mokolé were born, after no true Mokolé had walked the Earth in millennia. But old prejudices die hard, especially in those who *remember* back far further than they were alive.

Human Kinfolk have never been seen as equals to their Mokolé relatives. They are necessary, and more tolerable than other parts of humanity, in that they often can be trained in their proper place in the grand scheme of things, and provide service and support that allows the Mokolé themselves to do what it is they do best - remember and wait. Mates and offspring are also necessities; each successive generation offers the opportunity for more Mnesis to be revealed, more Dreams remembered, more bits and pieces of the past recovered.

There is more tolerance and respect for their beast Kinfolk among the weresaurians. Perhaps they are simply more familiar; the reptilians have changed very little in the

times since the Lizard Kings ruled, and their appearance is a comfortable reminder of the Age of Kings. Humanity, on the other hand has gone from proto-hominid to Homo sapiens, from useful, subservient (albeit ugly and weak) minions to uppity, cunning individuals who believe themselves the masters of the world around them. It is little wonder that most Mokole, even those born from human parentage, are more comfortable with their animal Kinfolk.

Nagah

While Kinfolk are important to every Changing Breed, the Nagah rely upon their Kin in a unique fashion. For many snake-shifters, their Kinfolk are the only individuals who know they actually exist. After forging their own extinction during the War of Rage, the Nagah severed all ties with the rest of the Changing Breeds and their former spirit allies. (The exception being those who joined the Beast Courts in the East, see Nagah, p. 52 for more details.) They also cut connections with all mundane allies and associates, spending generations alone in the Umbra with only their own kind.

When they emerged, they set about their reintegration with the mundane world with meticulous care. Kinfolk were identified through arcane ritual and clandestine research, beginning what would form one of the most painstakingly researched and maintained archives on Kinfolk lineages in existence. This research served a double purpose. First, it allowed the Nagah to keep tabs on any of their own who appeared to be nearing their First Change, and thus prevent the secret of their existence from being blown by an unfortunate transformation in front of witnesses. But just as importantly, it also allowed them to screen their Kinfolk carefully before broaching even the gentlest of connections with them. Those whom they determine unsuitable for incorporation into the great secret, even from casual observation are dealt with, watched, and protected from a distance, although they are likely to remain unaware of the source of their protection. They may be encouraged into employment or seduced into brief affairs with Nagah (or at least with one of the Nagah's disposable public personas) in order to ensure future generations, all the while remaining callously unaware of the service they are giving to their wereserpent relatives.

Those who make it through the first filtering process are approached with intent to recruit them into their local Kinfolk cult. They place the bait carefully, through offers of employment, casual social connections with interesting and attractive individuals, aid with challenges the unknowing Kinfolk may be facing, and the like. Slowly, the callow Kinfolk is reeled into the society, being sworn to secrecy, and is trusted with tidbits of information about the nature of the world around them and their place in it. Eventually, when trust is fully earned, the Kinfolk is made aware of their relative's existence, or at least the semi-fictionalized version that the Nagah desire their Kin to believe. Young

Kinfolk are taught that their shapeshifting relatives are sacred beings tasked with slaying wrongdoers, and that the secrecy surrounding them is a holy mandate. Fully indoctrinated, the Kinfolk serve the Nagah in many ways. They protect the young weresnakes until they are able to protect themselves. They provide a façade that allows the Nagah to remain hidden from human (and supernatural) society, performing mundane tasks like chauffeuring, accounting, shopping, and the like, which are difficult to manage for someone who the world does not believe exists.

And, of course, they are the spouses, lovers, parents, and children of Nagah, giving them the closest thing to genuine relationship connections that the Nagah will ever have. However, even between the closest of companions, no Kinfolk will truly know the Nagah they interact with. For their own safety, and the protection of the Sacred Secret of the Nagah's existence, they will only be offered what information the Nagah believes they can truly understand and protect, that which they need to know to serve and interact with the Nagah, and what will help the Nagah perform their sacred, secret duties.

Nuwisha

In some ways, the Nuwisha are so similar to the Garou that they have been known to actually pass for Garou among the wolf-shifters themselves. In others, they are a world apart, and one of the ways that they differ is in their relationship with their Kinfolk.

Garou and their Kinfolk have a tightly knit network, relatively speaking; in many ways, it functions much like a huge family reunion. Everyone may not know everyone (and some folks may not have a clue why they are there), but regardless of how the family lines intertwine or how much some of them want to just put in an appearance and go back to their normal lives, it's all one big (sometimes miserable, often dysfunctional) interconnected family. Being Kinfolk to a Nuwisha, on the other hand, is more like the relationship with a favorite great-aunt or that insane (but magical) lover from college. They aren't going to be around all the time, which considering their eccentricity and the chaotic effect they tend to manifest when they *are* around, may actually be a good thing. In fact, it may be years between meetings, with nary a word from them. But then they show up, and there's a bond there that is unlike any other relationship. They're the 80-year-old woman who disappears for months, returning with tales of her adventures on the Great Wall of China. The motorcycle-riding cousin who shows up out of the blue on a work night with directions to the best party — two states away. The college buddy who dropped out after a half-semester, but taught you more than all your university professors combined. Intermittent. Chaotic. Intense. Even callow Kin know that there are just certain people in their lives with whom they have a connection that transcends mundane explanation.

And, it's a very good thing that Nuwisha Kinfolk relationships have that intensity, because they lack the infrastructure that werewolves tend to be able to offer their non-shapeshifting relatives. Nuwisha society (if such a thing could be said to exist) simply doesn't have the same sort of support structure that Garou society does. Werecoyotes are individuals, first and foremost, whereas Garou are — at pack, sept, or tribal levels — social creatures. As well, Nuwisha Kinfolk are far less common than Garou Kin; with only 100 Nuwisha allowed on Earth at one time (and so much pranking to do while they're there) the Nuwisha have simply had less time and opportunity to breed with coyote or humans than their Garou counterparts. As such, Nuwisha Kinfolk tend to have far less connectivity with each other, or their shapeshifting relatives as a group.

Ratkin

Like the Corax, no Ratkin Kinfolk develops into a full shapeshifter on their own. There are no "accidental" First Changes for the wererats; every Kinfolk who becomes Ratkin does so by virtue of a specific act. While the wereravens bestow their Rite of becoming as an honor, for the Ratkin it is a necessity. In order to have any hope of surviving the current war, they know their numbers must continue to grow exponentially. Creating a massive Kinfolk breeding pool (and then converting as many of them as possible into shapeshifters) is the cornerstone of their plans for bringing about the destruction of both the Wurm and the Weaver, and allowing the Wyld free reign over reality.

Because of this, in the past few decades almost every Ratkin Kinfolk has been infected with the Birthing Plague as soon as they are old enough to have whelped or sired a few litters and are strong enough to have the potential to survive the physical and mental ravages of the Plague. Compared to other Changing Breeds, where Kin outnumber their shapeshifting relatives by orders of magnitude, this means that the number of Ratkin is quickly closing in on the number of their Kinfolk, with that ratio shifting even more with every passing year.

This is producing a unique culture among the wererats, where Kinfolk have become seen as a larval stage of shapeshifter, rather than something separate or less than their Ratkin relations. Rodent Kinfolk can reach sexual maturity by five weeks of age. Females have less-than-a-month-long pregnancies, and can whelp a dozen or more pups per litter, going back into heat within days of giving birth. They're most often encouraged to have a few litters before being bitten and infected with the Birthing Plague, whereas males are often bitten as soon as it's suspected they can survive the Plague's rigors. Through these methods, the rodens population has skyrocketed over the past few decades; it is likely that there are more rodent-born Ratkin and Kinfolk in the world today than all other shapeshifters and their Kinfolk combined.

Unlike other Changing Breeds, however, Ratkin place almost no value in their human Kinfolk. Compared to rats, humans have slow gestation, small “litters,” mature at a glacial pace – a rodens pair and their offspring could produce more than twenty thousand rats in the time it took a human to grow to sexual maturity. As well, in Ratkin eyes, humans – even their own Kinfolk – rely far too heavily upon the Weaver and its tools for survival. As such, they are not only painfully inefficient, but inherently tainted, and at best seen as cannon fodder and meat shields in the Ratkin’s war against Weaver and Wyrn.

Homid Ratkin hold the lowest ranking in their culture, and are viewed by the rest of Ratkin society as barely above the other Changing Breeds or humanity at large. They often avoid contact with larger groups of Ratkin, in no small part due to the suspicion their breed is viewed with by rodens and even metis Ratkin. But they are also usually ill-suited for human society, suffering from a combination of paranoia, schizophrenia, conspiracy delusions, and dangerously violent mood swings. Humans who can tolerate their presence are often just as ill-off, and the realities they deal with are often at least borderline delusional in nature. Because of this, most human Ratkin Kinfolk are callow – even if they are made aware of their natures, they’re often in no position to truly understand the lessons or the ramifications thereof, at least until they’re forcibly infected with the Birthing Plague.

Rokea

Save perhaps the Red Talon Garou tribe, no other Changing Breed hates humanity with the unyielding fervor and passion of the Rokea. While Ratkin may believe the human race to be tainted, the Rokea actively hunt and destroy not only humans, but their own human Kinfolk and homid breed, as well as any Rokea insane, tainted, and corrupt enough to mate with a human. Because of this, outside of the Same-Bito (p. 53), it is estimated that there are less than 100 human Rokea Kinfolk alive, and no known homid weresharks.

This means that the vast majority of Rokea Kinfolk are shark-born. Sharks do not raise their young; whether dropped in egg sacs or live-born, shark parents have nothing to do with a pup after it leaves its mother’s body. From then until two or three years of age, the life of a shark Kinfolk is most likely identical to that of its mundane counterpart. And, indeed, if they do not undergo an awakening into full Rokea, their life will most likely continue to be a near mirror image of that of a normal shark, with animal-level awareness of the world around them. They eat, rest (although not truly sleep), mate, and eventually die, in an ongoing state of callow Kinship and near-solitude. Only those few who will eventually go on to become full Rokea experience the broadening of perception, increased intellect, and eventual



ability to understand and use the Sending (a form of electric pulsar communication) to communicate with other Rokea. They may be protected by the Rokea, but this guardianship is more of a general tending to the Sea and its health than an actual protectiveness of any particular squamous Kinfolk based on familial affection.

Human Kinfolk, those few who exist, are another matter altogether. Other than the families of the Rokea who dwell within the Emerald Court (see *Same-Bito*, p. 53), homid Kinfolk of the Rokea are no more than one or two generations removed from their direct Rokea ancestors. To a person, those who are kenning Kin can trace their lineage as Kinfolk to a Betweenner Rokea who went to Unsea at some point after the 1955 Turna'a nuclear disaster that destroyed all of the great elder Rokea, most of the those of the Darkwater auspice, and more than 75% of the Rokea population alive at the time. Most are *kadugo*, the direct offspring of a Betweenner and a human who they – against all odds – formed a relationship with that transcended the Rokea's inhuman temperament and inherent solitary nature. *Kadugo-maker* is also the most offensive insult one Rokea can use for another, carrying tones not only of not being unclean and traitorous, but deviant to the point of insanity, which gives a strong idea of how Rokea view their homid Kinfolk in general.

The few *kadugo* who actually exist are often directly protected by their Rokea parent, whether they are callow or kenning Kin. The experience of caring for another individual in the way that humans feel affection for a mate or child is alien to the Rokea, and those Betweenners who do so are often fanatical in their dedication to their family members. After all, when something is strong enough to overcome the solitude and aversion that has exemplified one's kind for millennia, it is truly a force to be reckoned with.

Hengeyokai

Relations between the Changing Breeds and their Kinfolk are, in no small way, influenced by the cultures in which they are born. Each culture has countless different iterations, but generalities can be drawn across a broad range of specific deviations.

Relations between Hengeyokai and their animal Kinfolk are not, for the most part, significantly different than that of Western shapeshifters with their animal Kin – beasts care nothing for borders or the meaningless technicalities of human interpersonal customs. Save for the Hakken, who are desperately attempting to keep their lupine Kinfolk from utter extinction in Japan, the roles animal Kinfolk play in their relatives' lives is fairly simple and unchanging.

Within human Kinfolk, however, there are some major differences between Eastern Kinfolk relationships and West-

ern. Some are specific to individual Breeds, as noted below. Others are more generally applicable to all Hengeyokai.

As a culture, the Hengeyokai are more respectful of the elderly than their Western counterparts; ancestors are venerated, and age and wisdom are treated with respect compared to the Western focus on youth and vitality. As well, ritual and control are more highly valued than brutality and battle; while the Hengeyokai can be formidable fighters, they are more prone to seeking an elegant alternative to all-out-war compared to their Western counterparts. Because Kinfolk are unlikely to match their shapeshifting relatives in physical prowess, but may exceed them in experience, wisdom, intellect, or other resources of a non-physical nature, this results in a more balanced relationship between the Hengeyokai and their Kin than is often found in Western Changing Breeds.

Perhaps the most striking difference between the Kinfolk of the Hengeyokai and the Kinfolk of the Western world is the likelihood of contact with shapeshifters outside of their own relatives. With so many of the Beast Courts' sentai being formed of several different Changing Breeds, and the Courts themselves having much more cross-Breed interaction than happens among Western shapeshifters, a Kinfolk to the Same-Bito, for example, is much more likely to meet Kumo or Hakken than a shark Kinfolk ever would their Western counterparts.

While this can create a more cooperative and rich Changing Breed community, it is not always a good thing. Honor duels and intense inter-sentai wars have their roots in the unfortunate circumstances that arise when a Khan is (intentionally or otherwise) insulted by a Tengu Kinfolk, for example, or a Hakken becomes intent on winning the hand of his Zhong Lung sentai-mate's Kinfolk sister. At their best, cross-Breed connections can strengthen a Beast Court, but when relationships become rocky, the effects are far further-reaching than love-spats or arguments between a Hengeyokai and their own native Kin.

Hakken

Most Hakken make their home in Japan, where wolves are now extinct. By necessity, the Hakken's lupine Kinfolk have an awkward relationship with their shapeshifting relatives. Wild creatures by spirit and soul, they are too precious to the continuation of the lupine Hakken lines to be allowed complete autonomy and risk the same fate as the rest of Japan's wolves. Thus, their relationship with their shapeshifting cousins is an awkward blending of protected possession, pitied captive, and beloved relative.

Human relations vary slightly depending on whether the Hakken belong to the Beast Courts or not. Outside of the Beast Courts, Hakken culture closely reflects the sept system of the Garou. The majority of Hakken fall into this category, favoring their own inclusive cultures over commitment to the Beast Courts, which means most kenning

Hakken Kinfolk fill roles similar to that of their Western counterparts, although gender roles, familial responsibility, and being perceived properly by the outside world are even more important to Hakken and their Kinfolk than to other Garou and their relatives.

Those Hakken who join the Beast Courts are likely to be more inclusive and tolerant of other Changing Breeds, and this is reflected in their Kinfolk as well.

Khan

While more numerous than wolves are in Japan, the Khan's feline Kinfolk are endangered and rare throughout Asia. Many Khan tiger Kinfolk dwell on tiger reserves throughout Asia, an insult tolerated by the Khan only because the alternative – risking their Kinfolks' extinction – is inconceivable. Protective Khan do everything they can to support and defend these reserves, from actively patrolling their borders against poachers to calling in favors to politically and economically bolster them from a bureaucratic angle.

Khan are also fiercely protective of their human Kinfolk, although their quick tempers and bombastic personalities often create a respect tinged with more than a little fear in their human Kin.

Kitsune

Unlike the rest of Gaia's children, all Kitsune consider themselves Hengeyokai, although only a small portion serve the Beast Courts directly. Since those periods of service tend to be fairly short-lived, they do not overtly change the werefoxes' relationships with their Kinfolk, although juggling both the Laws of Heaven and the Way of the Emerald Virtues and Mandates may temporarily alter the fashion in which these crafty werefoxes interact with their Kin.

Kumo

While Western werespiders are a dispassionate and calculating Breed, their Eastern counterparts are truly evil in nature. Most make the conscious (and unconscionable) decision to dedicate themselves to the Wurm's service, and any who do not are hunted by their own kind and viewed with unyielding suspicion by the Beast Courts they attempt to find sanctuary within. This corruption cannot help but reflect itself on their relations with their Kinfolk.

Spider Kinfolk may well find themselves held captive, mistreated, or tormented by their shapeshifting relatives, but their primitive senses and lack of sentience make them dissatisfying targets for true sadism. Those efforts are generally reserved for the Kumo's human Kinfolk, who often find themselves unable to escape mentally and physically abusive relationships with their shapeshifting relatives. The depths which a Kumo can sink for their own enjoyment and

the edification of the Destroyer are nearly unfathomable, but even more disturbing is when the Kumo's corruption of their Kin is so complete that their victims not only begin to tolerate and enjoy their ministrations, but believe them to be actual affection.

Nagah

While the Nagah of the Eastern world are not as isolated as those in the West, they still prefer to remain under the proverbial radar as much as possible, meaning they still rely heavily upon their Kinfolk, both for practical support and for a sense of community. Most dwell within small settlements with their Kinfolk, interacting predominantly with their own Breed and direct relatives. Others are sworn to the Beast Courts and dwell within the territories of a Dragon Nest, although even among these, they maintain close and personal ties with their human and serpent Kinfolk.

The most significant difference between how Eastern and Western Nagah interact with their Kinfolk is the near-absence of Kinfolk cults in Asia. While care is taken to ensure that Nagah Kinfolk of the Hengeyokai understand the weight of the secrets that they bear, there is less of a façade involved in their interaction with their shapeshifting relatives. The snake-shifters' Asian Kinfolk do not, for the most part, need the fiction of an intricately crafted, false religion to create a sense of deep dedication and oath-sworn fealty to their Nagah relatives; such depth of devotion is more easily echoed from other aspects of their native culture.

Nezumi

For better or for worse, the Nezumi are more akin to their Western relations than any other of the Hengeyokai. They disdain humankind, including their own human Kinfolk, and value their rodent Kin as the key to survival and success in their War against the forces of both stagnation and destruction. They see other Changing Breeds, even those of the Beast Courts, as hopelessly tainted by the influence of humanity, and helplessly weakened by their reliance upon human society for survival (especially the Hakken and Khan, whose animal Kinfolk are all but extinct). And, perhaps most unforgivable to the rest of the Hengeyokai – they maintain relations and cooperation with their Western counterparts, both Ratkin and Kinfolkalike.

For the Nezumi, this is common sense; if one has the only winning strategy in a war that threatens annihilation, one's best allies are those with the same strategy. Western Kinfolk are just as worthy – or disposable in the case of human Kin – as those born locally. It makes little difference to the Nezumi if the rats they breed with were born in a Hong Kong back alley or a Seattle sewer; if they survive the Breeding Plague, they are obviously worthy to aid in the Nezumi's efforts.



Same-Bito

While there are obvious cultural differentiations between the Hengeyokai and the Changing Breeds of the rest of the world, none is so drastic as that of the Eastern weresharks and those of the West. While many Hengeyokai consider themselves superior to their western counterparts, the Same-Bito see the rest of the Rokea as humans might view a Neanderthal – a barbaric prototype, rather than as an equal.

Specifically, the Rokea's attitude towards Betweeners and their Breed's human Kinfolk are abhorrent to the Same-Bito. While most Same-Bito spend the vast majority of their time in the water, nearly a quarter of Hengeyokai weresharks are homid. Homid Same-Bito are not held in disdain by their squamous brethren, and both breeds cherish and protect their human Kinfolk with as much honor and diligence as those born of the Sea.

Additionally, where the Rokea have little interest in interacting with other Changing Breeds, Same-Bito often join the Beast Courts and interact with other Hengeyokai and their Kinfolk in cooperative efforts that span both land and sea. They hold the Zhong Lung (and their Kinfolk)

in great reverence, relying upon the serene wisdom of the Eastern weresaurians and their sacred Kin to balance the Same-Bito's inherently brutal nature.

Tengu

Of all the Hengeyokai, the Tengu are most likely to interact not only with their own Kinfolk, but with the Kin of every other Breed as well. Their curious natures, and dedication to ferreting out secrets, inspire them to poke their beaks into every nook and cranny, and it is not uncommon for a Tengu to be the first to discover a lost Kinfolk of another Breed, or to notice danger to distant relatives.

However, while Tengu have far-flung attentions, their depth of care suffers because of it. Like the Tengu themselves, wereraven Kin are expected to be self-sufficient, cunning survivalists, capable of going about their duties without a great deal of molly-coddling from their shapeshifting relatives.

That is not to say that the Tengu do not care for their Kinfolk; whether raven or human, Tengu Kin are a vital part of the information networks and spy chains that allows the Tengu to do their job, and many Tengu have loved ones who act as a sort of touchstone to return to when their duties send them flapping from one end of Asia to the other.

Their interactions, however, are simply not dependent on constant interactions or perpetual companionship, as much as mutual respect and unyielding loyalty.

Zhong Lung

The Zhong Lung are perhaps the most “hands-off” of all the Hengeyokai when it comes to interactions with their Kinfolk. While they will rise to the occasion when something threatens themselves or their close allies, most of their time is spent in the hazy half-consciousness of Mnesis. Their social construct with their Kinfolk is very ritualized and formal, overseen by a female elder who specializes in arranging and watching over matches which are normally lifelong, if not always monogamous, partnerships.

Male Zhong Lung live solitary existences, rarely interacting with others other than for brief periods wherein they mate, give council, combat direct mutual threats, or fulfil their duties to the Courts. Females, on the other hand, form small groups, and have more interaction both with other Zhong Lung and with their Kinfolk. Homid Zhong Lung aunts monitor the health and happenings of their local Kinfolk, often through older women within the community. Through their human counterparts, they provide wisdom about healing, cooking, farming and other domestic matters, in addition to interpersonal advice to strengthen and support the relations between their Kinfolk. Not only does this foster and maintain the Kinfolk community, but also provides them with vital information for matchmaking between the Zhong Lung and their human Kinfolk relations.

Supernatural Kinfolk

Kindred and Ghouls

To a vampire, a Kinfolk (whether of the Garou or another of the Changing Breeds) is just another blood bag; their supernatural connection to their shapeshifting relatives is imperceptible via magical means, and their aura is no different from that of any other human or animal. What is different, however, is their were-kin’s likely reaction, should they discover that a “leech” has dared to drink from a Kinfolk, let alone blood bond or turn them. As most Changing Breeds see vampires as servants of the Wurm, this insult would not pass lightly, and any Kinfolk unfortunate enough to be ghouled or Embraced would almost certainly be put out of its misery rather than allowed to live a corrupted existence.

The exceptions to this rule are the Kumo and the Black Spiral Dancers, both of whom have been known to willingly subject their Kinfolk to the unholy embrace of

KYPHUR CATS AND KINDRED

Long ago, the last remaining feline Kinfolk of the Bubasti were kidnapped by a coven of vampires in service to the dark god, Set, and fed blood to bind them into unholy servitude. They did so as a profanity of the cat’s role with the ancient dynasties of man, unaware of their connection to the werocats. These felines, driven mad by the blood of Set’s vampiric servants, survive to this day, somewhere in the darkness beneath Egypt’s deserts.

The Bubasti do not speak to outsiders of the fate of their lost Kinfolk, choosing instead to allow them to believe that the line is lost completely. There are those among them, however, who have made it their life’s purpose to attempt to ferret out their ghouled Kinfolk’s locations, and put them to rest once and for all.

the bloodsucking undead. While they are sacrificing their Kinfolk’s fertility and humanity, some believe that the powers potentially gained are sufficient tradeoff. Rarely do such Kinfolk remain long in their shapeshifting relative’s service, however; after the Embrace, a Kinfolk vampire is no different than any other supernatural apex predator, and their likelihood of remaining in service to a mortal – even one with supernatural powers – is slim.

It should be noted that while most Changing Breeds might be mistaken for Kinfolk at birth, they are either shifter or not from their conception. As such, a pre-Change Garou who is Embraced reacts like a Garou, not a Kinfolk, for the purposes of whether they die or become an Abomination rather than a vampire proper. (Assume his Gnosis is that of a beginning character of that breed.) Two types of Changing Breed Kinfolk – the Corax and the Ratkin – are transformed by outside forces, however, remaining Kinfolk up until the time the Rite of the Spirit Egg or Breeding Plague is performed.

Once the Breeding Plague has begun affecting a Ratkin Kinfolk, they would react just as a full Ratkin, dying or becoming an Abomination as fate sees fit.

No Corax would willingly perform the sacred ritual upon a Kinfolk-turned-vampire; the results, if such a thing were done through force or coercion, would result in the subject’s death as Helios’ connection with the Corax lethally burned clean the corrupted Kin.

Awakened Souls

While it is rare, it is possible for a Kinfolk's soul to Awaken. In those few circumstances where this has happened, the newly-created mage still remains Kin to their Changing Breed family. Those ties, supernaturally forged, are not broken by the Kinfolk's soul Awakening, although they may well find their relationship paradigms change significantly once they are in possession of supernatural powers themselves.

It is still possible (although no more so than with other Kinfolk) for an Awakened Kinfolk to give birth to a shapeshifting child. The chances of this are no greater than before the Kinfolk became a mage, however. It is still much more common for their offspring to simply be Kinfolk (or even human, if they mate with non-Kin humans rather).

It should be noted, however, that even for an Awakened Kinfolk, magic cannot create a Kinfolk or a Garou from a normal human. That miracle is beyond the kenning of mortal magic, no matter how awe-inspiring or far-reaching it might be.

Wraiths

Animal Kinfolk do not become wraiths; their spirits are returned to the cycle, and saved from further torment after their passing.

Most human Kinfolk do not become wraiths either, just as most humans do not. But, sometimes, especially for kenning Kinfolk, the lessons of duty and service are too strong to allow the Kinfolk to fully depart the mortal coil. They may torment those who abused them, or seek to protect those they loved, but regardless of whether for good or harm, those who do become wraiths are more likely than most to turn their postmortem focuses on the world of the living rather than interacting solely with the already dead. Their close ties to their shapeshifting relatives often cause those who are cursed with existence beyond death to dabble in Puppetry and Phantasm and other mortal-focused Arcanoi, regardless of the consequences thereof.





FRAN

Chapter Three: Kinfolk Characters

Go out in the woods, go out.

If you don't go out in the woods nothing will ever happen and your life will never begin.

— Clarissa Pinkola Estés,

Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype

Why Play Kinfolk

Kinfolk serve a vital purpose besides providing future generations of Garou. Garou numbers dwindle, no matter how assiduously they attempt to procreate. Gaia's chosen warriors must, by necessity, depend on their Kinfolk to serve in many capacities: as quartermasters, supplying the Garou with equipment necessary to continue their war against the Wurm; as support troops, taking on the Wurm's lesser warriors; as perimeter guards of caerns and other sacred lands; as scouts or spies, going among the minions of the Weaver and the Wurm in ways the Garou's nature and temperament make difficult.

As more and more Garou find themselves involved head-on in the struggle to preserve the balance and defeat the growing forces of the Wurm, Kinfolk become caught up in increasingly important aspects of Garou life—even though they may not know everything about what they're doing.

This chapter outlines the rules and variants for human Kinfolk characters. Use it in Kinfolk chronicles, in mixed Garou-Kinfolk chronicles, or as Storyteller characters to enrich the backstories of the Garou player characters.

Werewolf: The Apocalypse, 20th Anniversary Edition provides detailed directions for creating Kinfolk. (See pp. 379-386.) Some new Traits and Gifts are introduced in this chapter. Other Werewolf supplements have or will provide additional detail, but you should find enough in these pages to allow you to create a multi-dimensional Kinfolk character.

Note that we assume here that Kinfolk chronicles are about human Kin. While it is certainly possible to run a game of lupus Kin, since they are no different than wolves in behavior and intelligence, it would be a rather limited (although possibly enlightening) experience, perhaps akin to Jack London's *Call of the Wild* novel. We leave that up to the Storytellers and their players, if they should decide to try such a game.

Before putting anything down on paper, take a few minutes to envision your Kinfolk character. Create an image of her in your mind. What does she look like? Does her physical appearance reflect a particular ethnic heritage, perhaps one based on her Garou tribe? What tribe makes up the Garou part of her background? Is she human or wolf? Do others find her attractive, and, perhaps more importantly, does she find others more attractive than her Garou relations?

CHARACTER CREATION EXTRAS

Concept: Possible concepts for Kinfolk could include: architect, archaeologist, anthropologist, biologist, bounty hunter, ecologist, forester, lab tech, nature guide, outdoor writer, outcast wolf, police officer, zoo-born wolf. He could also be an animal shelter employee or animal rescuer, member of Doctors without Borders, evangelist/tent revivalist, freelance writer or journalist, handyman, nature photographer, aspiring politician, veterinarian, or almost anything else you think might imagine.

Numina

Numina for Kinfolk are categorized here into three types: Psychic phenomena (such as telepathy or clairvoyance), hedge magic (folk wizardry), and True Faith (the power of spiritual belief). Some of the Numina available to Kinfolk characters are described toward the end of this chapter and may also appear in future supplements.

| Trait | Cost |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| First Numen* | 7 freebie points per dot |
| Second Numen* | 14 per points dot |

Once you have an idea of your Kinfolk character's physical appearance and the kind of reaction she might get from others at a superficial meeting, you can go deeper into your character's make-up. Does she know she's Kinfolk? Most Kinfolk characters will be kenneing Kinfolk; if she is, what is her attitude toward her Garou relations? Does she take pride in her association with the Garou? Is she happy to play a support role, perhaps serve as the mother of children who might undergo the First Change? Or, instead, does she resent taking a backseat role that may very well impede all her future life choices? Does she hate the thought that the Garou consider her as nothing more than a brood mare or a glorified servant? If this describes her feelings, does she bottle it up and pretend compliance while planning revenge? Or does she fail to dissemble, letting her family and even the Garou know her feelings and taking whatever consequences may follow?

What role does she play in the human world? Is she still a student, whether in high school, college, or as a graduate student? Does she hold down a 9-5 job, perhaps as a secretary, a sales person, or a factory worker? Does she have a professional career as a doctor, veterinarian, or emergency medical technical? Or is she an artist or self-employed, a career that gives her a good deal of unstructured time in which to fulfill her Kinfolk obligations?

Once you have taken all these factors into consideration, you're ready to assign dots and choose traits to bring your Kinfolk character into game-playing life

New Talent

Intuition

From time to time, you have good hunches. You have learned to trust them. At times, you might not be able to explain why you suddenly know certain things, or how you jump to a startling conclusion based on a confusing or mystifying set of facts. Your instinct tends to serve you very well, except when it doesn't. Intuition reflects your aptitude in making good guesses and relying on your gut feelings. This is not a psychic ability; rather, it is an innate "sixth sense" that enables the character to sense if someone is lying or whether or not a particular argument holds more persuasive force than another with the target individual. A character with Intuition may be able to string together tiny or otherwise overlooked clues, resolving into the strong feeling that "we need to go to the warehouse now!" or "Mr. X is the person behind this." Storytellers can use a character's Intuition to give information to the players or as a handy device to move along a stalled plot when all else fails.

- **Novice:** Your instincts help you find the right track.
- **Practiced:** You automatically follow your initial guess rather than second-guessing yourself.
- **Competent:** You always know when something's going down.
- **Expert:** You know not only what's wrong, but who's behind it.
- **Master:** Your insights and hunches scare you sometimes!

Possessed by: Kinfolk, counselors, mothers, trending experts, teachers, intuitive diagnosticians, private detectives

Specialties: Reading Between the Lines, Subtext, Sensing Dynamics, Meditation

New Knowledge

Bureaucracy

You understand the world of human organizations and have learned to weave your way through the strands of red tape that permeate most government agencies, and private or public businesses. This Ability allows you to find the quickest way to accomplish something through the usual channels, getting speedy answers and bypassing many of the snags waiting to trap the unwary. You slice through red tape as if it were strips of paper. You know who to talk to and which strings to pull to get what you (or your Garou kin) need. For you, it's a game rather than a chore. Combined with the Contacts Background, you can make a lot of inroads that

allow you to help both Kinfolk and werewolves. Whether or not the Garou appreciate your efforts, you are effective and take pride in your expertise.

- **Student:** Although you have just embarked on your trek through the red tape jungle, you are able to plan well, and you can locate local government offices using either the Internet or the old-fashioned phone book.
- **College:** Your knowledge is growing, and you are an accomplished amateur. In times of trouble, you know the best people to contact.
- **Masters:** You have honed your organizational skills to a fine pitch. Some Glass Walkers might envy your command of “the system” and your information network. You may even have a degree in management, business, or marketing.
- **Doctorate:** You wend your way with confidence through all but the highest levels of bureaucracy. Red tape melts when you appear. Only the highest officials put you on hold. Shadow Lords take notice of your expertise. You could lecture on the subject of bureaucracy if you wanted to.
- **Scholar:** You can arrange meetings with almost anyone. You possess the skills to run a multinational corporation, complete with subsidiaries. Other bureaucrats who know about you look to you for advice.

Possessed by: Kinfolk, politicians, lobbyists, government employees, PACs, bureaucrats

Specialties: Facilitation, Loopholes, Rights Protection (civil, animal, children’s, etc.), Red Tape Cutting

Herbalism

You have studied plants with an eye to using healing herbs as well as cooking herbs. You believe that herbs are far and away better than pharmaceuticals, since they are purer and less likely to be tampered with. In fact, you tend to distrust anything made by Big Pharma, even to the extent of making your own aspirin from scratch whenever possible. You enjoy using herbs in food preparation as well and are known for your particularly tasty dishes. Perhaps you even “spike” your soufflés and casseroles with certain herbs that provide extra nutrients or enhance immune systems. You know how to grow herbs, harvest and prepare them, and may even have your own herbal business. You know how to make soaps, dyes, lotions, and other products using natural products.

The systems use of herbs is in the hands of the Storyteller. Suggestions include: slightly improved healing times (with regular administrations of poultices and/or teas and elixirs), calming and soothing, stimulant effects, etc. Herbs, when used properly, can help heal wounds and illnesses and mitigate symptoms without the adverse side effects and addictions that often come with the use of modern

pharmaceuticals. Kinfolk far removed from urban areas and without health insurance find Herbalism to be a vital means for maintaining a healthy community.

- **Student:** You are able to make some basic herbal mixtures and can identify most standard herbs.
- **College:** You can identify, plant, grow and harvest just about any herb, with the exception of extremely exotic or rare herbs. You can make most herbal concoctions and treat some wounds and illnesses.
- **Master:** You are a doctor of herbs. You may have an advanced degree in botany or in herbal studies, or you may have acquired your knowledge through an apprenticeship and years of study. You can diagnose many types of illnesses and prescribe herbal cures for them, and treat most wounds with herbal poultices and such.
- **Doctor:** You may have a doctorate in botany, herbal medicine, or some other advanced study relating to herbs, or you may have outstripped your own teacher and are now passing your knowledge along to students. You can make complex herbal cures and treat any wound with confidence. You also make a mean ratatouille!
- **Scholar:** You could put your herbal knowledge into a book; perhaps you’ve already done so. If you wanted to, you could teach at a university level. You may have lectured on herbs or even acted as a consultant to several medical boards or herbal institutions. “Herb” might as well be your first name.

Possessed by: Kinfolk, Children of Gaia, holistic healers, herbologists, grandmothers

Specialties: Medicinal Herbs, Growth and Preservation, Herbal Healing, Potions, Household Products, Poisons

Veterinary Medicine

Your interest in medicine drew you to veterinary school rather than medical school. You find it not only satisfying but useful and important to look after the health of Gaia’s non-speaking creatures. You take pride in your ability to diagnose patients who can’t verbalize their problems. You have also found it useful to treat wolf Kin and lupus Garou instead of relying on human medicine to take care of them. You are respected among other Kinfolk and among the Garou as well.

- **Student:** You are still learning how to treat animals medically, but you can perform many kinds of first aid and emergency treatment on animals and Garou.
- **College:** You have the basic veterinary knowledge, but you need experience in the field to gain confidence in everyday healthcare for animals and your Garou kin.

- Master: You can add the title “Dr.” to your name, or the letters D.V.M. after it. You know how to care for everything from gerbils to elephants. There still may be some types of animals you have not yet mastered, but not many. The Garou find you useful for medical problems that can’t be dealt with by Gifts.
- Doctor: You have an established reputation in the veterinary community at large as well as among Kinfolk and Garou. You can do everything from treating minor wounds to performing major surgery under difficult conditions. You feel certain you can take care of most of the Fera, as well, if necessary.
- Scholar: You have published papers and books on aspects of veterinary medicine and you are qualified to teach in veterinary colleges nationwide. You don’t necessarily have a public practice, but you could do so if you wish. The Garou and Kinfolk keep you busy enough with their problems and consider themselves fortunate to have you.

Possessed by: Veterinarians, scientists, researchers, animal activists, Kinfolk

Specialties: Holistic, Surgery, Exotic Animals, Small Animals, Wild Animals, Wolves

Rituals

Garou learn this Knowledge in order to participate in the spiritual life of sept, tribe, and Garou existence in general. Kinfolk have their own version of Rituals that likewise enables them to add a spiritual and communal element to their existence as blood relations of the Garou. This Knowledge conveys some general knowledge of the Garou rites and mysteries (such as the names and intents of most Garou rites and a simplified version of Garou traditions). In addition, Kinfolk who possess this Knowledge can participate in rites specifically created for Kinfolk. While many Kinfolk rites involve the formalized behavior common to most ceremonial events and serve to provide a closer bond among Kinfolk, or between Kinfolk and their Garou Kin. Other rites provide limited access to the spirit world, though any power gained from such rites in no way rivals the potency of Garou rites. A character cannot learn a rite of a level higher than her Rituals rating.

- **Student:** You’ve closely watched as other Kinfolk perform rites.
- **College:** You’ve successfully participated in rites performed by others.
- **Masters:** You teach rites to other Kinfolk.
- **Doctorate:** Garou watch you to pick up pointers.
- **Scholar:** You can create your own rites and could write a book on the subject.

Possessed by: Garou Kinfolk, Fera Kinfolk, some hedge mages

Specialties: Individual Rites, Group Rites, Accord, Mystic, Seasonal, Minor

Backgrounds

Many of the backgrounds in this section resemble the ones that appear in the *Werewolf: The Apocalypse, 20th Anniversary Edition*. These backgrounds, however, emphasize their relevance to Kinfolk characters. Other backgrounds are new and pertain exclusively to Kinfolk (or as exclusively as a Storyteller wishes them to be). Storytellers should help their players choose backgrounds that fit the Chronicle. The Backgrounds Allies, Contacts, and Mentor remain the same for Kinfolk. The main rulebook covers these. Kinfolk may not purchase Kinfolk, Past Life, Rites, Totem, or Fetish. Instead, Kinfolk may purchase the new Background Kinfolk Rites in order to learn special rites just for them. They may take Fetish as a Kinfolk Merit.

Equipment

Either from your Garou family, a Fellowship (see pp. 27-31), another connection, or through your own cleverness, you have access to highly specialized equipment not available through standard channels. This equipment can range from the relatively simple (silver bullets) or rare and hard to get (a mage’s “ray gun”). You begin the game with this equipment, but when it’s gone, whether used up, lost, stolen, or destroyed, you cannot replace it except through roleplaying. (See below, or the main rulebook for ideas or examples.)

- **One minor item:** Equipment may include silver bullets, quality Kevlar vests, street-level drugs, etc.
- **Two minor items:** These can include laser sights, healing herbs, gas masks, or police-issue pepper spray.
- **One major item:** These include explosive ammunition, wiretaps, pharmaceuticals, surgical field kits, white noise generators, small private aircraft, and other items of similar quality. If you have the Merit Gnosis (5 pts.), you could have a lesser talen at this level.
- **Two major items:** More major items include specialized vehicles, military-issue firearms, electron microscopes, etc. If you have the Merit Gnosis (6 pts.), you could have a greater talen at this level.
- **One unique item:** High-tech experimental firearms, magical crystal balls, and untraceable poisons fatal to Garou are possible. If you have the Merit Gnosis (7 pts.), you may elect, instead, to own one powerful talen. At this level, the Storyteller should help the player select the item so that it will not overbalance the story.



Garou Favor

You have somehow earned a big favor from a Garou. Perhaps you rescued one or more of his Kinfolk or saved his life. You might have performed some action that prevented the destruction of a caern or other spot sacred to Gaia. This means that you can claim one favor from the Garou who owes you. The type of favor is up to you and your Storyteller. It could range from a “get out of jail free” card that provides you with an out from a risky or potentially fatal situation. You can either gain some positive boon from the Garou or avoid a negative effect. It might be a cash gift, a piece of fancy equipment, even a hit on someone who is threatening you or your family. Like the Equipment Background, once you call in your favor, it is gone. You can always try to earn another one by roleplaying for it in the game. Explain to the Storyteller the circumstances that led to your acquiring the favor.

- One favor from a Garou of low rank (0-1).
- One favor from a Garou of medium rank (2).
- One favor from a Garou of high rank (3-4).
- One favor from a Garou of highest rank (5).
- One favor from a tribal leader.

Renown

Very few Kinfolk ever gain Renown in the eyes of Garou. Occasionally, one of the Kin performs some action that the Garou feel merits the awarding of Renown. This Background allows your character to begin the game with some temporary Renown. You may choose whether the points go into Honor, Wisdom, or Glory, or whether you receive a combination of the three. You should work out with your Storyteller the circumstances under which your character receives her Renown. (See the Renown Chart for more information and suggestions.) Even possessing Renown, a Kinfolk may never receive the rank of a Garou. Nevertheless, as with Pure Bloodline, Garou recognize and honor Kinfolk with Renown, but they demand more work and service from them as well.

- One temporary point of Renown.
- Two temporary points of Renown.
- Three temporary points of Renown.
- Four temporary points of Renown.
- Five temporary points of Renown.

KINFOLK RENOWN

The following chart illustrates sample awards of Kinfolk Renown. You may add to it or use it as the basis for designing your own chart to fit your chronicle. Keep in mind that every positive award carries the potential for an even greater negative. If you refer to the Renown Chart in *Werewolf: The Apocalypse, 20th Anniversary Edition* (pp.246-250), remember that Kinfolk awards do not receive as many points. As a rule of thumb, give one point of Kinfolk Renown for every four points of Garou Renown. Only use Renown if you think it will not unbalance or detract from the focus of your chronicle.

| Activity | Glory | Honor | Wisdom |
|--|-------|----------|--------|
| COMBAT AND ENCOUNTERS | | | |
| Extreme valor in the face of death | 1 | - | - |
| Surviving an Incapacitating Wound | 1 | - | - |
| MYSTICAL EVENTS | | | |
| Exposing Wyrn-tainted Kinfolk | 1 | - | - |
| Exposing a Garou as Wyrn-tainted | - | - | 4 |
| Having and following a prophetic vision | - | - | 2 |
| Discovering fetishes, talens, long-lost lore | - | - | 1 to 3 |
| Being asked to participate in a moot or rite | - | 1 | 2 |
| CAERN ACTIVITIES | | | |
| Being asked to help guard a caern | 1 | - | - |
| Dying in defense of a caern | 3 | 3 | - |
| Refusing to fight in defense of a caern | -3 | -1 | - |
| RELATIONS WITH GAROU AND KINFOLK | | | |
| Serving your tribe faithfully (five years) | - | 1 | 1 |
| Maintaining good relations with other Kin | - | - | 1 |
| Bearing Garou offspring | - | 1 | -1 |
| Refusing to mate* | - | -4 | - |
| MANNERS AND BEHAVIOR | | | |
| Answering a request for sage advice | - | - | 1 |
| Protecting Garou not of your tribe | - | 1 | - |
| Rudeness | - | -1 | -1 |
| Speaking badly of Garou | - | - | -3 |
| Acting without honor | - | -1 to -5 | - |

* Only levied once the Kin is no longer capable of fathering or bearing a child, and then only if he/she willfully resisted doing so all that time (miscarriages or lack of fertility don't count so long as the Kin tried to have a baby).

Resources

Just as for Garou, this Background reflects your material and personal wealth, your assets, and your access to means. For Kinfolk, Resources also reflects how much you

can help your Garou relatives. Werewolves often rely on Kinfolk to come up with the funds to buy sacred lands, purchase equipment, and fund raids against Pentex and other Wyrn-tainted human organizations and companies, along with anything else that might cost more in money

or equipment than the Garou can provide for themselves. While some Garou may, in fact, be independently wealthy or prove able to handle the outside world well enough to amass their own material goods and money, most find it safer (for themselves and for humanity) to let their human Kinfolk interact with society, especially in affairs as potentially volatile as keeping a job or handling the pressure of investments or corporate management. The Shadow Lords and Glass Walkers, in particular, pay attention to the wealth their Kinfolk may accrue. Other tribes, such as Red Talons and Stargazers, may not care as much about material possessions or money. Most tribes fall somewhere in between. Even Bone Gnawer Kinfolk may accumulate up to three dots worth of Resources that they are able to contribute to their Garou relations (those scratch cards paid off!).

- **Student:** You have enough to squeak by on. You have an efficiency apartment (rental), keep a low-income job (or jobs), a moped or bicycle, and lots of canned soup and Ramen noodles. You could find room and board with you for one Garou relative for a few days.
- **Middle class:** You have an apartment or small house and an older car. You have a steady, but often tedious job that lets you save a tiny bit each month, if you're careful. Your clothes are good but rarely fashionable. By serious budgeting and buying cheap cuts of meat, you can provide for a couple of Garou for three months or a single Garou for longer.
- **Upper Class:** You work at a professional level and earn good wages or are self-employed in a successful endeavor. You own a nice home or condo, drive a car no more than five years old (and have your eye on a "green" vehicle), and have nice clothes with popular, eco-friendly labels. You could support half a dozen Garou for a year and still manage steak tartare and rare filet mignon on a regular (not daily) basis.
- **Wealthy:** The family estate is or will be yours. You have access to land, a small staff of servants, a couple of fine cars (including that green-fuel SUV you've always wanted), and a stuffed bank account. Your investments are solid and doing well. You could (and perhaps do) support a large pack of Garou indefinitely.
- **Filthy Rich:** Money? No object. You possess multiple homes, at least one per season, have a fleet of cars, and interests in several businesses. With your assets, you could probably support the entire Garou population of North America for a while, at least.

Rites

Like their Garou relatives, Kinfolk find importance and meaning in the performance of rituals to celebrate who they are, recognize significant milestones in their lives and otherwise mark themselves as separate from non-Kinfolk humans. This Background determines how many rites the character knows at the beginning of the game. The ratings represent levels of rites, so that a character with four dots in Rites may know one Level Four rite, four Level One rites, two Level Two rites or a Level One and a Level Three rite. A character must have a Rituals Knowledge rating of at least the level of the rite she wishes to learn, so our character in the previous example must have four dots in Rituals to have that Level Four rite. These levels refer to Kinfolk rites only; if a Kinfolk who possesses the Rituals Knowledge wishes to learn a Garou rite, she must work that out with her Garou kin. Kinfolk may not learn above a Level Two Garou rite. Higher levels of the Rituals Knowledge allow a Kinfolk to learn only more Level One or Two Garou rites. For example, a Kinfolk with four dots in Rites may, with permission, learn four Level One Garou rites, or two Level Two, or two Level Ones and one Level Two Garou rite. Kinfolk may also learn minor Kinfolk rites at a cost of two minor rites per dot. This Background merely notes how many levels of rites a Kinfolk knows, not whether or not they are Kinfolk or Garou rites. Being able to know a rite and actually learning it are two very different things.

- You know one level of rites.
- You know two levels of rites.
- You know three levels of rites.
- You know four levels of rites.
- You know five levels of rites.

Merits and Flaws

Merits and Flaws add to the ways in which you can personalize your Kinfolk. These are optional tools, and not every Storyteller may allow them. Purchase Merits with freebie points. Flaws earn a number of freebie points, up to a total of seven. Having a character with more than seven points in Flaws often results in an unplayable individual. Alternately, your Storyteller may allow you to select up to seven points of Merits offset by an equal number of points in Flaws. In addition to the ones listed here, **W20 Corebook** lists a number of Merits and Flaws in its Appendix (p. 470). Some of these may be appropriate for Kinfolk as well as for Garou. Other sourcebooks may contain additional Merits and Flaws suitable for Kinfolk, provided your Storyteller approves their use.

Storytellers may even want to base some of their stories on the Flaws the players select for their characters. For example, a Kinfolk with a Fetish Merit or an Outsider Flaw

may find themselves embroiled in a sept's affairs, either favorably or not so favorably.

Mental

Airhead (1 pt. Flaw)

Your personal concerns are so important that you tend to be clueless about the real world or what is going on around you. This may be your means of avoiding problems or retreating from your fears; nevertheless, you don't often use your brain to its best advantage — or any advantage, it seems. Those who know you describe you as “spacey,” and their patience often wears thin around you. You fade in and out of conversations, insert non sequiturs, or just plain fail to get it. The Garou and even your own Kin make fun of you behind your back.

Flashbacks (1- 3 pt. Flaw)

You may have left the battlefield, but it never left you. Alternately, you survived a traumatic catastrophe in your childhood or some other time in your past. Whatever the source of your “episodes,” you re-live the horror of those hideous moments as if they were happening all around you. As a one-point Flaw, you have momentary flashes of the event, enough to rattle you for a single action or a few minutes. As a two-point Flaw, the flashback can last as long as an entire scene and requires action on the part of someone you trust to bring you back to the present. No roll is required. As a three-point Flaw, you feel the terror anew and you struggle to get away from it as you did way back when. Everyone around you becomes part of your horror scenario. A family member or close friend may try up to three times to bring you back using a contested Willpower roll. After that, you need professional help. Medications may reduce the difficulty of bringing you back to speed by lowering your Willpower, but only for purposes of calming you down.

Supernatural

Supernatural Kinfolk (4-5 pt. Merit)

This Merit is not intended for mortal Kinfolk. If, however, you intend to play a vampire, mage, wraith, or changeling character who is also Kinfolk, you *must* purchase this Merit. Despite your supernatural status, your Garou tribe (or other Changing Breed) accepts you as Kin. They may not rejoice in it, but they don't automatically deny or reject you. Individuals outside your family, including other Garou, may not like you. Other tribes may not acknowledge you as Kin. Most Garou view mages as Gnosis-raiders. They see vampires as Wyrmspawn, wraiths as un-natural, and changelings as untrustworthy. In fact, you may experience a conflict of interest in walking a fine line between your two supernatural worlds. You find, nevertheless, that there

is merit in knowing about both your supernatural and your Kinfolk backgrounds.

Supernatural Kinfolk costs four points for mages, changelings, and wraiths. Vampire Kinfolk costs 5 points due to the inherent hostility between Garou and Kindred. Sometimes even family ties are hard-pressed to bridge the gap between the two gestalts.

Kinfolk characters created with the standard rule (i.e., those who are not either dead, Awakened, Embraced, or Kithain), may not have this Merit. It is reserved exclusively for characters constructed as wraiths, vampires, mages or changelings based upon the rules for those games.

Wyrms-Tainted (4 pt. Flaw)

Whether through your own twisted actions in the Wyrms' service, an unfortunate hereditary blemish, or through sheer bad supernatural luck, you reek of Wyrms-taint. Because certain Gifts enable a Garou to identify you as marked by the Wyrms, most werewolves may try to kill you outright! This Flaw is not to be taken lightly. You should work with your Storyteller to determine how you acquired this taint, unless you want it to be a mystery to your character.

Physical

Unscented (1 pt. Flaw)

For some reason, you have no noticeable body odor. Your scent is so faint as to be practically undetectable by animals and Garou. This may work to your advantage while hiding from scent-driven predators (and many humans may prefer a neutral-smelling person), this fact is a decided disadvantage among Garou. They are likely to instinctually distrust anyone without a scent, suspecting that he or she is using supernatural means to hide Wyrms taint. No Gifts, such as Scent of the True Form, can reveal you as Kinfolk. Among a group of people who rely heavily on their sense of smell, you have a distinct disability.

Kinfolk Gifts

Although some Kinfolk can learn and use Garou Gifts, restrictions apply. Kinfolk characters may not begin play with Gifts (i.e., they may not be purchased with freebie points during character creation). They must acquire Gifts through good roleplaying and character development, and these Gifts must be purchased using experience points gained in play or, perhaps, as special rewards from the Garou or from spirits helped by the Kinfolk. In addition, the number of Gifts a Kinfolk may possess should never outstrip what would be reasonable for a Garou. A Kinfolk character with more than two or three Gifts would have to have very good reasons for possessing so many! Most Kinfolk who can use Gifts have

one Gift; occasionally, a talented and Gaia-blessed Kinfolk might have two Gifts. Under very special circumstances, and only as a reward for exceptional roleplaying, a Kinfolk who accomplished something unique and epic, might acquire three Gifts.

Gifts 101 for Kinfolk

Kinfolk can only learn Level One Gifts, never Level Two or higher.

Once a player purchases a Gift for her Kinfolk character, the character must learn the Gift during play before she can use it. Such a Kinfolk must first find someone to teach her the Gift. Since spirits teach most Gifts, the Kinfolk needs to find a Garou — usually a Theurge — to summon a spirit to act as teacher, although any Garou who can summon spirits will do. At the same time, the aspiring Kinfolk student must present evidence to the Theurge of her need to learn the Gift, her accomplishments that merit this privilege, and how she can help her Tribe by knowing this Gift. If she has any Renown, throwing in a recitation of the deeds that led to receiving it couldn't hurt.

Next, the Theurge, provided he is willing, must call forth the spirit that can teach the Gift. If the spirit decides to appear, the pupil needs to negotiate with it, usually through an interpreter using Spirit Speech. Except to act as a translator, the Theurge at this stage does not involve himself in the bargaining process unless a threat to the sept presents itself (or in case the spirit takes an intense dislike to the Kinfolk). During this process, the Storyteller should ask the player to make the appropriate Social rolls.

Sometimes spirits contact Kinfolk on their own, without a Theurge to mediate. If the Kinfolk performed some deed that pleased the spirit or did the spirit or one of its earthly children a significant service, the spirit might decide to teach the Kinfolk a Gift as a reward. If this happens, the Kinfolk has no choice in what Gift he has the opportunity of learning. One does not provoke a spirit by putting conditions on its generosity.

Kinfolk cannot learn Gifts as quickly as Garou can, but a patient spirit can teach its Gift to a Kinfolk in several hours.

Renown, Tribe, and Breed

Possessing Renown can help a Kinfolk who desires to learn a Gift. She may need to recite her deeds either as part of the price for teaching or in order to persuade the Theurge to undertake the process of calling up the spirit. A student who behaves in a respectful manner and otherwise impresses her Garou kin with her demeanor may have an easier time convincing the Garou to assist her in learning the Gift. Kinfolk do not have Rank; rather, they may have permanent Renown to a certain point. (See Kinfolk Renown, at the end of this chapter.)

GIFTS ARE NOT FREE

After long sessions spent bargaining with Garou and spirits, hours (or sometimes months) of practice, suitable presents, chiminage for spirits, and perhaps even the completion of tasks or quests, the player may spend experience points to purchase the hard-won Gift. The costs involved for a Kinfolk to learn a Gift are:

| Teaching | Cost |
|--|-----------|
| Gift is of Kin's breed or tribe | 15 points |
| Gift is outside Kin's breed or tribe | +5 points |
| Gift is taught by a Garou rather than a spirit | +5 points |

Kinfolk generally cannot learn a Gift outside his breed or tribe. A Bone Gnawer Kin, for example, has little if any chance of convincing a lupus Glass Walker Philodox to summon a spirit to learn a Gift usually reserved for Glass Walkers. As always, exceptions may occur due to special circumstances, great need, or the welfare of an entire sept. The continuous tensions between breeds and among the tribes lead to a certain possessiveness about their Gifts.

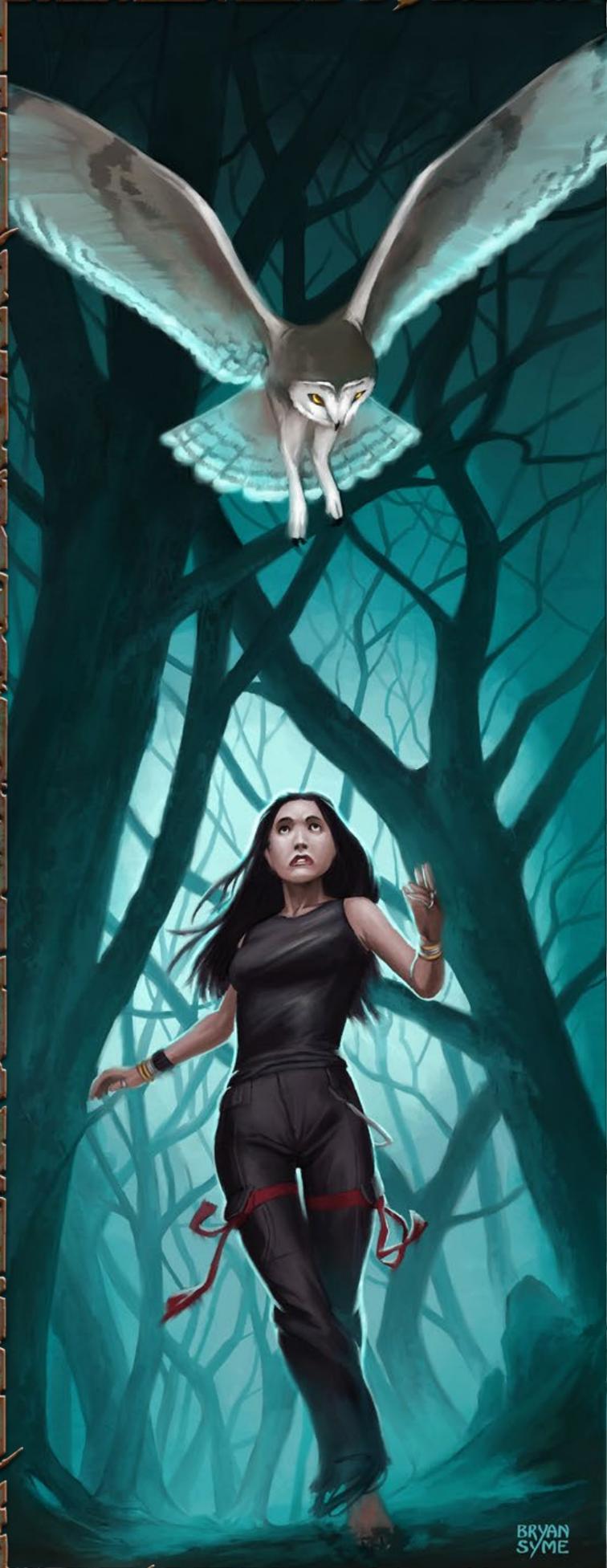
Kinfolk have better luck keeping within their own tribe and breed for seeking out Gifts. If a Kinfolk is particularly close to his sept, working often and consistently to serve the Garou, he stands a much better chance of gaining approval for learning a Gift. Garou may see allowing a particularly trustworthy Kinfolk the chance to acquire a Gift as a way of arming another soldier against the Wurm.

Note that as rare as it is for human Kinfolk to learn Gifts, it is even more rare for lupus Kinfolk to acquire them. The wolf cannot actually *learn* a Gift in such a case; instead, the spirit *instills* the Gift in him. Hence, lupus Kin can only know and use Gifts that work passively or can be activated instinctually.

Gnosis

Unless a Kinfolk has the Merit: Gnosis, she can only learn Gifts that do not require the expenditure of Gnosis. This imposes a severe limitation on the Gifts available to a Kinfolk. Gifts such as Blur of the Milky Eye (W20 Corebook, p. 161), Falling Touch (p. 170), or Lambent Flame (p. 193) do not require Gnosis to invoke. These, therefore, are the most common Gifts for Kinfolk to learn.

Kinfolk who possess Gnosis have a much wider choice. In theory, they can learn any Level One Gift with the ex-



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ception of those that require the user to spend Rage or require Rage rolls. Since Kinfolk do not possess Rage under any circumstances, these Gifts remain beyond their ken.

Original Kinfolk Gifts

The Children of Gaia first recognized the advantages of having Kinfolk with the ability to use Gifts. Not only did Gifted Kinfolk strengthen the tribe by giving them one more way to help their Garou kin, knowing Gifts sometimes meant that Kinfolk could help themselves in situations where they might otherwise have to ask for help from the Garou. Because of this, some Children of Gaia helped their Kin create their own unique Kinfolk Gifts. These Gifts are also available to the Garou, but since they tend to be less powerful than even Level One Garou Gifts, most werewolves forego them in favor of their own, more potent ones.

With Storyteller's approval, players might create uniquely specialized Gifts for their characters, in addition to the ones presented below. Such Gifts count as if they were within any Kinfolk's breed or tribe for purposes of experience point cost.

Some Gifts differ from Garou Gifts of the same name by duration, number of times it may be used per day, or strength of the boon.

Tribal Gifts

The Gifts presented here are, in most cases, slightly altered versions of the Garou Gifts of the same name. Kinfolk versions may have a shorter duration, require expenditure of either Gnosis or Willpower, or must make an additional effort to make an effect permanent. This list does not include all the possible Gifts, but stands as a sampling of what Gifts are possible. The Storyteller and players may add or subtract to this list or create unique Gifts.

Learning Gifts from other tribes is possible, but only under certain circumstances.

Black Furies

- **Owl's Speech (Level One)** – Black Furies and their Kinfolk may draw on the connection between Athena and her sacred owls by means of this Gift. This Gift combines the effects of the Galliard Beast's Speech Gift and the Philodox King of the Beasts Gift, though it only works on owls. The Moon-Daughters often share this Gift with Kinfolk, particularly those with Gnosis.

System: If a Kinfolk possesses Gnosis, this Gift is permanent and may be used at any time. If a Kinfolk does not possess Gnosis, she may learn this Gift, but must spend a point of Willpower to invoke it each time. It lasts for 8 hours.

Bone Gnawers

• **Chain Talk (Level One)** This Gift enables a human Kinfolk to participate in the Bone Gnawer's Barking Chain for a brief time. Because they cannot change shape, Kin do not have the ability to shape lupine noises. For the duration of this Gift, the human Kinfolk's normal voice can mimic that of a wolf's. The human speaks normally, but the sounds that he produces mimic the language of the Barking Chain.

System: The Kinfolk spends either a point of Gnosis or Willpower to evoke this Gift. With Willpower, the Gift lasts for the length of one series of conversations (usually one scene). A Kinfolk who possesses the Gnosis Merit may use Gnosis instead of Willpower to extend the duration to 24 hours. A wolf- or dog-spirit teaches this gift.

• **Trash Hound (Level One)**— This Gift resembles the Bone Gnawer Level One Cooking Gift except that Kinfolk without Gnosis can learn it. A Kinfolk uses a special cooking pot, such as a cast iron skillet, Dutch oven, or other all-purpose vessel and fills it with some sort of liquid and any food or food-related items that happen to be nearby. The food need not be still edible. Items can include wrappers from fast food to gourmet deli-paper, cereal box-tops, coffee filters, and similar goodies. The result is a meaty stew, a hearty casserole, mac and cheese, or spaghetti and meatballs — enough to feed a family for a main meal.

System: The Kinfolk combines the ingredients while concentrating on the desired meal, spends a point of Willpower, and waits 15 minutes. At the end of this time period, the food is piping hot and ready to eat. The meal must be consumed before the next morning or it will disappear. If a Kinfolk possesses Gnosis, spending one point of Gnosis instead of Willpower also erases tiredness and ensures a good night's sleep for all partakers. This Gift is taught by a fire-spirit.

Children of Gaia

• **Water-Conning (Level One)**— A Child of Gaia Kinfolk can evoke this Gift to purify any but the most tainted water by putting her hand into the water or touching her forehead to the surface. An avatar of Unicorn teaches this Gift after the Kinfolk performs an appropriate service for Unicorn.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis (or Willpower) and rolls Perception + Intuition. Water polluted by feces or parasites has a 6 difficulty. Water fouled by chemical wastes or other man-made toxins has an 8 difficulty. Wyrmtaint may be cleansed only by a Garou possessing this Gift. Each success purifies enough water for one person for one day.

Get of Fenris

• **Safe Haven (Level One)** — This Gift allows a Fenrir Kinfolk to put a supernatural watch on her house or territory so that she instantly knows when anyone tainted by the Wyrmtrespasses. Kinfolk who live within the bawn of a sept find this a useful Gift to know. An Owl-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis (or two points of Willpower) to activate this Gift. Afterward, one point of Willpower (or Gnosis) per day maintains it. When anyone possessing Wyrmtaint enters the designated area, the player may roll Perception + Occult (difficulty 7) to detect the intrusion. More successes enable the character to pin-down the type and strength of the intruder. Kinfolk may only protect an area they can lay claim to, whether within the bawn (excluding the actual caern) or in the outside world.

Glass Walkers

• **Control Simple Machine (Level One)** — Similar to the Glass Walker Garou Gift, this Gift allows Kinfolk to command the spirits of simple machines, cause switches to flip, operate levers, push buttons, etc. A technological spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Willpower point and rolls Manipulation + Crafts (difficulty 7). The Gift lasts for one scene.

• **Diagnostics (Level One)** — As with the Glass Walker Garou Gift, this Gift enables a Kinfolk to tell just by looking what is wrong with a machine. She may then enlist the machine's spirit to aid in repair. Any technological spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player must spend a point of Willpower to enable the Kinfolk character to correctly diagnose the problem. By spending a point of Gnosis (or two points of Willpower), the Kinfolk may convince the spirit to aid in the repair process. The player rolls Dexterity + Repair (difficulty 6). The repair time is halved as well as the number of successes needed for a successful repair.

• **Well-Oiled Running (Level One)** — This Gift enables Kinfolk to keep their fighting equipment in the best possible condition, free from dust, damp, or other environmental factors. It is taught by a dust, war, or water spirit.

System: The player spends one point of Willpower and rolls Stamina + Crafts (difficulty 7). Each success allows the Kinfolk to protect one piece of machinery from environmental damage for one day. Direct hits or physical attacks still affect it.

Red Talons

• **Howl to the Pack (Level One)** — This Gift enables the wolf Kinfolk to raise her voice in a howl that any pack member of hers can hear, regardless of distance. Garou associated with her pack can also hear this howl and may respond to it. This Gift is instilled by a wolf-spirit.

System: The player spends one point of Willpower to activate this Gift along with a howl.

• **Purify Meat (Level One)** — This Gift allows a wolf Kinfolk to cleanse tainted meat of poison, chemicals and other toxic substances not produced naturally. Foods that are toxic to wolves and other animals are not affected. The

wolf must sense (usually by smell, touch, or taste) that the meat is corrupted. This Gift can cleanse 50 pounds of tainted meat. A wolf-Kin must possess at least one point of Gnosis to learn this Gift, which is taught by a water-spirit.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point. The character must touch the meat to activate the Gift.

Shadow Lords

• **Aura of Confidence (Level One)** – This Gift enables the individual Kinfolk to project an aura of superiority toward other humans, preventing anyone from detecting his flaws or read his aura. An ancestor-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: Kinfolk must spend a point of Willpower to enact the Gift, which has a duration of one week.

• **Whisper Catching (Level One)** – This Gift allows a Kinfolk to supernaturally overhear conversations, giving her a chance to get a heads up on any potential plots against the Garou or their Kin. A crow-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Willpower point and can hear whispered conversations within earshot as if the speakers were next to her. If obstacles or distance could impede ordinary conversations, the player may need to make a Perception roll to succeed.

Silent Striders

• **Heaven's Guidance (Level One)** – A Kinfolk with this Gift can always find her way when there are stars visible in the sky. This Gift is taught by a spirit servant of the North Star.

System: The Kinfolk must spend a point of Gnosis to learn the Gift, but after that, it always operates from twilight to dawn. The user of the Gift is never lost so long as she can see a single star; she always knows where north is and the path she took to get to her present location.

• **Silence (Level One)** – The Kinfolk can muffle any sound he makes. This Gift enables Kinfolk to assist his Strider Kin when necessary. An owl spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and gains +2 dice to all Dexterity + Stealth rolls. This Gift lasts for one scene.

Silver Fangs

• **Osprey's Eye (Level One)** – This Gift enables a Kinfolk to spot objects or people through water, ignoring any distortion or discoloring of the water that might otherwise impede sight. It enables the user of the Gift to see someone who is underwater as clearly as if they were on dry land. An osprey- or salmon-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis (or two points of Willpower). The Gift lasts for one scene and cannot be used

again for 12 hours. When the user is underwater, the difficulty of Perception rolls is at a -2 difficulty for seeing objects or people.

Stargazers

• **Balance (Level One)** – The Kinfolk achieves near perfect balance and can walk across ledges, ropes, or other narrow objects regardless of how slippery or mobile the surface is. A wind-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis or two points of Willpower and centers himself upon the task. Climbing difficulties decrease by 3, and maintaining balance is automatic. While this Gift is permanent for Garou once enacted, a Kinfolk must enact this Gift once each day or when necessary.

• **Iron Resolve (Level One)** – The Kinfolk uses her resolve to execute great feats through Willpower alone. An ancestor-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The Kinfolk spends a Willpower point to gain 2 automatic successes instead of one. This ability may be enacted no more than three times per day for Kinfolk.

Uktena

• **Sense Magic (Level One)** – The Kinfolk can detect the pulses of magic and mystical energies, whether the spiritual Gifts of the Garou or the blatant power of wizards or the more harmonious magics of healers, shamans, and other tribal practitioners. They can also sense the darker energies that emanate from vampires or those who practice infernal magic. A spirit-servant of Uktena teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Perception + Enigmas, with a difficulty that varies according to the nature and strength of the magic being sensed. One or two successes merely suggests that some spiritual energy is present. Three or more successes provide additional information. For example, the user can tell if the magic relates to dreamcraft, herbal magic, blood magic, or demoncraft. The radius is 20 feet per success.

Wendigo

• **Call the Breeze (Level One)** – The Kinfolk can conjure up a strong, cold wind (20 mph) that chills anyone not prepared for it. The wind can redirect or disperse clouds of vapor or airborne toxins such as tear gas. It can also deflect swarms of insects. An air elemental teaches this gift.

System: The Kinfolk spends a point of Gnosis (or two points of Willpower) and whistles or hums to summon the wind. She can direct it by thought. Anyone caught in it loses one die from Perception rolls for the duration of the wind and, unless dressed appropriately for such a wind, suffers a -1 penalty to all actions after one minute of exposure.

Rites

Many Garou tribes include Kinfolk in a number of their rites. These rites usually honor Gaia, mark seasonal changes, or address milestones in the life of an individual or family. Some rites, of course, are for Garou only. In the same fashion, Kinfolk have devised their own rites intended to bring them closer to each other as Kinfolk or to mark gatherings of Kinfolk from a number of different tribes. While most of these rites do not require Gnosis and do not involve mystic powers, they do serve to renew Kinfolk's connections to their tribes, to Gaia, and to one another.

Usually, a Kinfolk elder acts as ritemaster to enact the rite. If a Garou is present, she is often asked to lead the rite or participate in it as a matter of courtesy or respect. Garou are free to refuse to lead the rite with no negative implications, since these rites are properly led by Kinfolk. For a Garou to refuse participation in a rite when asked might imply some sort of criticism. Therefore, such requests never happen lightly.

Many of these rites are versions of Garou rites of the same name, but a few are unique to Kinfolk, or to Kin of certain tribes. Kinfolk group their unique rites under the same categories as the Garou use, for convenience. The following list of Kinfolk rites present a sampling of ceremonies and does not purport to be exhaustive. Players and Storytellers should feel free to create their own rites for Kinfolk chronicles.

One rite common to many kenning Kinfolk is the Baptism of Fire (p. 210, **W20 Corebook**), whereby a Kin family can assign a Kin Fetch spirit to one of their offspring. Although the Kin ritemaster cannot summon the spirit, a Kin Fetch that is already present to the family can be used. Such a spirit can make itself known and visible to the ritemaster. For more on Kin Fetches, see pp. 99-104.

Rites of Accord

Rites of Accord for Kinfolk seek to restore or create harmony within a Kinfolk family or group. An element of symbolic rebirth or new beginning is usually present in these rites. They have no supernatural power attached unless the Kin acting as ritemaster possesses Gnosis and chooses to spend it to add to the rite. They are usually quite psychologically and spiritually effective for Kin who practice them.

Rite of Apology

Level One

When members of a Kinfolk family have a serious disagreement and wish to make amends and permanently put animosity behind them, they may enact the Rite of Apology. The concerned individuals stand facing one another and forswear any feelings of anger or blame, declaring that no

KINFOLK RITES CHART

| Type | Roll | Difficulty |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Accord | Charisma + Rituals | 7 |
| Homestead | varies | 7 |
| Milestones | Charisma + Rituals | 7 |
| Punishment | Charisma + Rituals | 7 |
| Renown | Charisma + Rituals | 6 |
| Seasonal (Changing Year) | Stamina + Rituals | varies |
| Minor | none | none |

Where Gnosis is necessary, its use and related difficulty is indicated in the rite description.

disagreement, whoever is at fault, is worth enmity between Kin. Each person focuses on transferring her anger or blame or negative feeling onto a single sheet of good writing paper. Once this is done, each person enacting the rite exchanges papers so that each person touches each piece of paper. The papers are put together and each person takes a turn at ripping the paper in half. With each tear, the anger dissipates. The torn paper is burned and discarded, along with the ill feeling.

System: Nothing needs to be written on the paper, but the Kinfolk must spend a point of Willpower to transfer her feeling onto it. No roll needs to be made, but the Willpower point cannot be regained for 24 hours. The effect is permanent for that quarrel.

Rite of Unity of Purpose

Level Two

This rite is enacted on one of two occasions. Either some major issue has divided a Kinfolk family and needs to be reconciled, or the family is about to undertake some major project as a group. This can involve moving from one location to another, or going into combat as a family unit.

Sway the Hand of Anger

Level Two

This Garou rite protects a related Kinfolk from a Garou's frenzy. The ritemaster convinces a protective trickster-spirit to bond to the Kin. If the designated Garou (who must be related to the Kin by blood or tribe) loses control and attempts to attack or threatens the Kin (or if the Kinfolk feels

threatened), the spirit awakens and redirects the Garou to attack other targets. Once this has happened, the spirit is freed. The rite must be repeated each time to continue to provide the Kinfolk with protection.

System: The ritemaster locates a household or trickster-spirit (usually with help from a Garou, a fetish, or through personal encounter) and, through gifts or persuasion, convinces it to latch onto the Kinfolk who is the subject of the rite. The ritemaster spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Charisma + Rituals (difficulty of the spirit's Willpower).

Rites of the Milestones

These rites do not use any mystic power nor do they require the expenditure of Gnosis. Willpower helps strengthen the impression the rite leaves on its participants but is not absolutely necessary. Kinfolk use these rites to mark various stages in their lives, to acknowledge and reaffirm their identities as Kinfolk and as individuals. Tribal variations may distinguish the rites from those of other Garou tribes, but the enactment of each rite differs from household to household. Some Kinfolk do not see the necessity of these rites, while others hold them very near and dear to their hearts.

Rite of Welcoming (Birth)

Level One

The birth of a new Kinfolk is a cause for rejoicing. This rite takes place as soon as mother and child return home from the hospital (if the child is born there) or, if the child is born at home, as soon as mother and child are rested and aware.

The family gathers in one room of the house. One of the Kinfolk elders, usually the father, but sometimes a grandparent, aunt, or uncle, takes the infant from the mother and holds him up for everyone to see. The ritemaster introduces the child by his name, first to Gaia, then to the tribe totem, and, finally, to the other family members, by name and relationship. If non-family members are present by invitation and expect to stand in relationship to the child as god-parent, protector, etc., that individual is also introduced to the child by name and relationship.

The child is returned to the mother's arms after that, and, unless any tribe-specific events occur, the rite concludes, usually with a ceremonial meal or a toast. Fianna Kinfolk generally throw a party, while Silver Fangs usually spend time discussing the child's lineage or drawing up an individual family tree. One Silver Fang family adds a stylized leaf-painting with the child's name and birth date to a mural of the family tree. Bone Gnawers sometimes give the child some sort of trinket so that she will not be entirely without resources, while Silent Strider Kinfolk take the child for his first official "outing," even if it is just around the yard.

(This rite is entirely separate from the Garou rite that attaches a Fetch to the child.)

System: The ritemaster conducts the rite using whatever steps and formulae customary to the family or the tribe. A point of Willpower may be used to reinforce the ceremony on the memories of the participants, including that of the infant.

Vow of Partnership (Mating)

Level One

While many Kinfolk undergo standard marriage rites, depending on their religious beliefs, as well as the requisite civil ceremony, some also want to solemnify their union under the eyes of Gaia. The Vow of Partnership establishes the nature and duration of the relationship between two Kinfolk or between a Kinfolk and a Garou.

The ceremony usually takes place in the home or on the ground of one of the Kinfolk. Sometimes a location outside the home is used, such as a national or state park, a community center or arboretum. Occasionally, a wilderness site serves as the venue for this rite. If the site is anywhere other than the home of a Kinfolk or on territory claimed by Garou (i.e., the caern or its bawn), someone who can perform the Rite of Cleansing should do so to ensure the place is free of Wyrmtaint.

Once the site is ready, the family and friends gather around the couple to witness their vows to one another. The commitment may be a life-bond, or may have some specific time or condition, such as "until we have a child," or "for a year and a day."

After the recitation of the vows, the ritemaster pronounces the couple bound to one another in the eyes of Gaia, the Garou, and Kinfolk. Again, each tribe may have a variant to add to the ceremony. The rite ends when the ritemaster introduces the couple to the attendees.

System: No rolls are necessary. The couple may spend a point of Willpower each to seal their vow.

Wake for the Departed (Death)

Level One

This rite honoring a Kinfolk or Garou who has recently died takes place after any official services, such as a funeral or graveside ceremony. The form this rite takes varies from tribe to tribe, and from family to family. Fianna Kinfolk usually hold a wake that might last for days, with music, dancing, stories, songs, and lots of alcohol. Silent Striders may make a pilgrimage, visiting the deceased's favorite or most meaningful places. Silver Fangs hold a more somber version of a wake with the deceased's genealogy recited and discussed *ad infinitum*. Likewise, the Get of Fenris hold a supper honoring the deceased with much touting of the honoree's most memorable actions, testimonials, and solemn drinking. Glass Walkers celebrate their dead Kin through online meetings. Wendigo usually hold

a potlatch in honor of the departed during which the family gives many of their relative's possessions to those who knew and honored him. Children of Gaia Kinfolk might establish a scholarship fund or make a donation to a charity or cause dear to the heart of the departed, while individuals might pledge volunteer hours in the deceased's name.

System: No rolls are necessary.

Rites of the Homestead

These rites revolve around the places where Kinfolk reside and serve to dedicate their living places to Gaia, to declare themselves as a household of Kinfolk, and to ask for protection from the spirits. Whenever possible, a ritemaster who possesses Gnosis should perform these rites; otherwise Willpower in sufficient amounts can substitute.

Rite of Homestead Dedication

Level Two

Whenever a Kinfolk builds, buys, or otherwise acquires a new residence, this rite dedicates the structure and surrounding area to the service of Gaia, much as the Garou Rite of Caern Building, though less powerful. This rite may be performed several times, as appropriate: when a site is purchased or acquired, when building starts, when a manufactured home is put in place, when the structure is complete before the family moves in, and on the first evening in the new home.

The details may vary according to the building stage, but the rite usually involves making a circle around the perimeter of the land as well as around the house itself, while calling upon Gaia and the tribe's totem spirit (and any other spirit that might have attached themselves to the Kin family) to recognize the house in the Umbra and look upon it with favor.

A talisman representing all the family members along with either some building material from the house or yard is buried near the door of the house. At the end of the final ceremony, the family enters the house and offers thanks to Gaia for their home.

System: A point of Gnosis must be spent (or two points of Willpower). The player rolls Charisma + Rituals, difficulty 7. One success is needed.

Rite of Protection

Level Two

When the home or family of a Kinfolk comes under threat, whether from human agents or from the supernatural community, this rite can give the house and property of a Kinfolk family some temporary protection until their Garou kin can set some better protections or until the family can get to a safe place. When there is time to prepare, the

ritemaster takes a talisman or pouch containing symbols of every person to be protected as well as something of the household (pets, too!) and asks the tribe's totem spirit or a spirit of protection to prevent anyone who intends harm to the family from entering the house or its grounds. The rite master makes a paste from his own blood and the "blood" of the land around the house (i.e., blood and dirt) and daubs the talisman with the paste while asking the spirit's help. If the rite succeeds, the talisman disappears, taken into the Umbra by the spirit.

System: The ritemaster must possess Gnosis or an item that allows her to use Gnosis. She must speak a chant composed when she learned the rite while making the paste, another chant while applying the paste to the talisman, and a third chant while she spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Charisma + Rituals (Difficulty 7). Only one success is necessary, but more successes provide stronger protections.

The effects are largely up to the Storyteller, but usually involve making the rolls of any who intend harm to suffer higher difficulties. Attempts to set fire to a protected home might find matches won't light or the wind snuffs out flame. Those sneaking into a protected home might slip on the steps or accidentally break a window, alerting those inside.

The rite lasts for 24 hours per success, and may be repeated as necessary until no more Gnosis exists. Since the enactment of the rite also notifies the nearest Garou kin of the danger to his Kinfolk, the rite generally does not need to be performed more than once or twice.

Rite of True Seeing

Level Two

This rite needs to be performed by a Garou for the appropriate individual. It allows a non-Kinfolk who has married or partnered into a Kinfolk or Garou family to gain temporary immunity to the Delirium. To enact the rite, the Garou must work with the subject of the rite to create a talisman from some strands of that individual's hair and a few strands of the Garou's hair from his Crinos form. The ritemaster explains to the subject that she must burn the talisman while the ritemaster imbues the burning talisman with power. The result grants the individual immunity to the Delirium for seven days, after which the rite must either be repeated or a more permanent solution found.

System: After making the talisman, the ritemaster spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Charisma + Rituals (difficulty 7). Only one success is necessary.

Rites of Punishment

As with most families, punishment is usually handled within the family as the offense occurs, and usually involves only misbehavior and minor wrongdoings by the children. Depending on the nature of the parents and their philosophy

of child-rearing, the external mores exerted by schools and society, and the general tendencies of the tribe, the types of punishment meted out to children vary from extensive lectures (with or without a hefty dose of guilt tripping—Children of Gaia, Bone Gnawers, Stargazers, Uktena), revocation of privileges or allowance (Silver Fangs, Shadow Lords, Glass Walkers), to more corporal methods of punishment (Get of Fenris, Fianna, Wendigo). Kinfolk children already grow up with the weight of Kin responsibilities to some extent, so punishment is just another normal occurrence in a life that most parents want to seem as normal as possible.

When an adult or older teen Kinfolk commits serious or chronic behaviors that threaten the family's ability to function as Kinfolk, of these rites might be used to impress upon the errant Kin his need to change his ways. Again, these rites are not enacted at the drop of a hat. Most family problems are just that — family problems.

Rite of Exile

Level Three

When a member of a Kinfolk family has proven so disruptive as to destroy the family's unity and interfere with its duty to tribe and to Gaia, the head of the family may choose to enact this rite to send the offending member away, usually for a fixed period of time. In order for this to

happen, every member of the Kinfolk's household who is at least 12 years old (or two years old, if a lupus Garou is part of the household) must agree that nothing further can be done to change the Kinfolk's bad behavior.

Once a household has made this decision, the ritemaster calls the offending Kinfolk before her for one last chance at change. She reads or lists the bad behavior, usually such things as serious drug or alcohol usage with no intention of reforming, physical abuse of family members, inexcusable criminal behavior, consorting with infernal beings or Wyrmspawn, and the like. The subject of the rite then has a chance to speak for himself, either explaining his behavior or promising under oath to change his actions. During the rite, the subject's words either have the ring of truth or they sound flat and tinny, indicating lies or insincerity.

If the Kinfolk can successfully explain why he offended the family ("I was enthralled by a vampire," or "if I didn't do what they wanted, they were going to hurt you," or even "I really screwed up because I didn't think anyone cared about me, and I promise it won't happen again," the ritemaster declares the rite over without completion and works with the rest of the family to help the Kinfolk.

If, on the other hand, the Kinfolk shows no remorse, the ritemaster continues with the rite and declares the subject of the rite exiled from the family for a certain period of time



— usually at least a year and a day, and sometimes as long as five years or more. The conditions for reinstatement into the family are stated at that time. “You must prove that you are no longer subject to chronic drunkenness,” for example. The rite ends with the subject physically leaving the home. Usually, the family will allow the exiled individual to return to the house long enough to pack a couple of bags and a bedroll. Sometimes these things are prepared before the rite, so that once the subject leaves the house he cannot return until the time of exile is over. If he attempts to do so, he suffers bouts of sickness, crippling anxiety, and general bad luck until he is swayed from his course.

System: This rite takes some preparation. The ritemaster prepares a candle to symbolize the person to be exiled. He inscribes the name of the Kinfolk on the candle and places it in a holder in the room where he will hold the rite. When the rite begins, the ritemaster spends a point of Gnosis and lights the candle, which burns throughout the ceremony. The ritemaster rolls Charisma + Rituals (Difficulty 7). Success enables the candle to continue burning as long as it needs to and creates the aura of truthfulness within which the words of condemnation and defense are spoken. If the rite is ended without completion, the ritemaster carefully releases the candle to burn out naturally. If the ritemaster completes the rite, he blows out the candle forcefully and snaps it in half. The gesture physically compels the Kinfolk toward the door and, with the exception of a grace period to gather his things, acts as a barrier to prevent the exile from returning within one mile of the household until the time of exile is ended.

Rite of Intervention

Level One

A Kinfolk family may enact this rite when one of their family needs to face some truth about herself or take a course of action that she would otherwise refuse to take. Not unlike interventions in the outside world, this rite differs in that it has the force of Gnosis behind it.

Situations that might warrant a rite of intervention might include convincing a family member to take charge of a chronic disease or affliction and seek help to manage it, to advise a family member to seek counseling for depression or some other mental or emotional disorder, to bring chronically quarrelling family members (siblings, or husband and wife, etc.) together to work out their differences, and other repairable situations.

System: The family arranges for the subject or subjects to be present and confronts them. The ritemaster announces she is beginning the Rite of Intervention. Each family member is expected to contribute to the discussion as well as to express their caring for the rite’s subject. The ritemaster spends a point of Gnosis or two points of Willpower and rolls Charisma + Rituals. The more successes, the more

persuasive the intervention, though one success is enough to complete the rite.

Rites of Renown

These rites mark acts of heroism or brave deeds in defense of the family or the tribe or any other of Gaia’s children. While they do not confer Renown among Garou, unless the Garou agree to award temporary Renown, these rites have meaning among other Kinfolk.

Rite of Challenge

During a family gathering or a Kinfolk gathering, one Kinfolk may issue a Rite of Challenge to another Kinfolk. The challenge can be a simple one: I challenge you to a race to see which of us is faster, or complex: I challenge you to go to the cave at the foot of Slickback Mountain and stay the night, and bring me proof you’ve been inside the cave.

If the challenged one accepts the challenge, the challenger and challenged work out the details of the challenge, who is to judge it, and how to determine success or failure. Both Kinfolk spend a Willpower point to seal the challenge.

When the action is completed, the second half of the rite takes place. In the presence of the same Kinfolk who witnessed the challenge, the challenged individual makes his claim of success or admits failure. If he succeeds, he gets back the point of Willpower he spent. If he fails, his challenger gets back the point she spent.

System: Willpower is expended in both parts of this rite. No rolls are necessary.

Seasonal Rites

The Garou honor the passing of the year at the solstices and the equinoxes. In most cases, Kinfolk can participate in all or part of these season celebrating rites. See the **W20 Corebook** for descriptions of these rites (pp. 218-220).

Minor Rites (Individual Rites)

Minor rites take place throughout the day in the life of a Kinfolk who wishes to reinforce his dedication to Gaia, tribe and family. These rites take half the time to learn and cost half as much. They usually require no expenditures of Gnosis or Willpower and do not have to take place in secret.

Rite of the Morning Song

The Kinfolk rises before dawn and prepares to greet the first rays of morning fire. Starting with the first true sun rays (not just the lightening of the sky), the Kinfolk offers praise to Helios. She may sing (words are optional), read or speak a poem, intone and chant syllables, or otherwise vocalize her greeting. If she does this for nine straight sunrises, like the Garou Rite Greet the Sun, the Kinfolk gains the ability

to Sense Wyrms for the next nine days as if she possessed the Garou Gift. If she misses even one morning, she must begin again for the effect to take place.

Rite of Evening Chant

This rite requires the Kinfolk to sing Luna's praises through one entire phase of the moon. Songs, poetry, stories, and other verbalizations must be made for at least 15 minutes. After the Kinfolk has completed the requirement, he receives an additional die on all Social interactions with Garou of the same auspice as the moon was when the rite was performed. This rite is sometimes performed with other Kinfolk, but the results are separate for each Kinfolk. This effect lasts until that moon phase comes around again (either waxing or waning).

Equipment

Kinfolk may possess or acquire many kinds of specialty equipment. Some, particularly fetishes and talens, are exceptional items possessed only by a few Kinfolk, and then only through unique circumstances. Players and the Storyteller should come up with a story to explain how a Kinfolk character possesses each fetish or talen she claims.

Non-supernatural equipment may also be difficult to acquire, either due to prohibitive costs, limited availability, or the nature of the equipment. Possession of certain objects may also bring the owner to the attention of government agencies. Storytellers should keep a listing of which characters own items that would bring them to the notice of law enforcement or governmental departments.

Fetishes

Fetishes require attunement through a Gnosis roll (difficulty of the fetish's Gnosis rating, with only one success necessary). Once attuned, anytime the Kinfolk calls upon the fetish's powers, he must make a Gnosis roll or spend a Gnosis point, depending on the individual requirements of the fetish. Some fetishes may be used by Kinfolk without Gnosis. Instead, these rare objects require Willpower rolls or expenditures for attunement and use instead of Gnosis points. The difficulty remains the fetish's Gnosis rating. Usually, a Theurge must make a particularly good case with the inhabiting spirit for allowing its use by a Kinfolk. Some possible fetishes appear below.

Blood Brother Blade

Level Three, Gnosis 7

This hunting knife is carved or painted with Garou pictograms representing Kin and/or Honor. When it is first made, a Garou and a Kinfolk each cut themselves with the blade and then join their blood together in the traditional

"blood brothers forever" ceremony (any gender can do this). Those two are then mystically bonded through the blade. This bond can survive the death of the Kinfolk and pass to his or her bloodline children, but once the Garou passes away, the spirit inhabiting the fetish is freed.

The bonded Kinfolk can later activate the fetish (using Willpower or Gnosis) by cutting himself with the blade (a slice across the thumb will do). This alerts his bonded Garou that the Kin is in need of him. There is no supernatural compulsion to come to the Kinfolk's aid, but since Garou do not idly hand out these fetishes, it is assumed that the Garou will do all in her power to come running.

Alternatively, the Kinfolk can activate the blade by cutting an enemy and drawing blood (or ichor, whatever the case may be). The bonded Garou will then know the scent of the enemy and be able to recognize it anywhere and be able to track it once she encounters it.

This fetish is made by binding an ancestor spirit related either to the Garou or the Kinfolk participating in the ceremony.

Bloodhound's Snout

Level One, Gnosis 5

This is a dog's leash that, when activated by a Kinfolk (who can roll Willpower or Gnosis to do so), will lead its owner along the trail of a particular target's scent. The Kinfolk must have a sample of that scent, such as from a scarf, glove, or even water bottle the target drank from, and he holds that item up to the leash as he activates the fetish. This acts in every way like a normal, living dog tracking the scent. It can be fooled by all the sorts of things that can baffle a dog, such as by the target crossing a stream or rolling in animal scat to overpower his own scent, etc. During activation, the leash literally pulls out ahead of its holder, traveling along the ground as if there were an actual dog at the end of the leash. Each activation lasts until the target is run to ground or a full day passes, whichever occurs first.

This fetish is bound with the spirit of a domestic dog. It is easier to make this fetish if its intended recipient Kinfolk is an experienced and caring dog-owner. If the Kinfolk has ever abused a dog, he cannot use this fetish; the spirit will not cooperate with him.

Hearth Caul

Level Four, Gnosis 7

This is the remains of a Kinfolk's birth caul, a piece of birth membrane. Caul births are very rare, and much folklore has been built up about the magical uses for a baby's caul. Should a Kinfolk be so lucky as to be born into a family who honors such traditions, the entire family can benefit. The caul must be saved and preserved with special herbs (the Herbalism Knowledge Ability can help with

identifying and collecting them well ahead of time) and is then kept in a special box that is hidden somewhere inside the family's hearth. If the family doesn't have a fireplace, they'll need to declare a hearth space, and be able to hide this box from view.

So long as the family keeps the caul, its members (immediate family and extended family so far as uncles, aunts, and first cousins) gain good fortune. This is not miraculous luck, such as winning lottery tickets, but more protective and nurturing, synchronicities that might at first appear to be foul luck but then reveal themselves to be providence: Hundred-year floods that wash the neighbor's houses away, leaving only the Kins' unharmed, or a flat tire that prevents one of the family members from driving over a bridge just before it collapses.

Should a non-family member see the caul, its effects end until it can be re-activated by a family member using Willpower or Gnosis. The difficulty is one less if performed by the family's recognized matriarch. Should a non-family member (except for a Garou) touch the caul, it is ruined; the bound spirit leaves the fetish.

The spirit inhabiting the fetish is an ancestor spirit of the Kinfolk or their related Garou tribe.

Songbird Staff

Level Two, Gnosis 6

This oak staff is carved with stylized images of birds of all types, from wrens and vireos to crows – but not predators and scavengers like hawks and eagles. When a Kinfolk activates it (using Willpower or Gnosis), it will produce faint bird sounds, chirpings, cawings, or even scoldings. The user can understand simple messages about her immediate environment, such as whether there are people or predators nearby, if the weather is about to change (such as rain or snow is coming), or if there is imminent danger (a forest fire or a coming earthquake). The user can query the staff for more specific information by making bird sounds herself – they just have to sound somewhat like birds; they don't have to be perfect – and will receive very basic replies: the group of humans over the ridge is armed, there are three of them; or the oily substance in the water originates five miles upstream. Generally, if it is information that would be known by the local bird population (even if they can't think analytically about it), the staff can convey it.

This fetish requires a bird spirit, preferably a songbird or a talkative bird like a crow or raven. It cannot be a bird that preys on other birds.

Talens

Talens differ from fetishes in that they are single-use items. They require no attunement; the user must make a Gnosis roll or spend a point of Gnosis to activate the

talen. In some cases, Willpower may substitute for Gnosis, particularly in the case of talens meant for use by Kinfolk.

Biting Bullet

Gnosis 7

This is a bullet or round of buckshot. A Kinfolk (or Garou) who puts it between his teeth and bites down can fire the bullet at a target he faces, just as if he were taking aim with a gun. He rolls Dexterity + Firearms or Athletics to hit. The damage delivered depends on the caliber of the bullet; act as if it were a real gunshot. Unfortunately, the biter takes one level of bashing damage from the explosion in his mouth.

This talen contains a fire spirit.

Finders Keepers

Gnosis 5

There's an old joke about a drunk who loses his keys in the park but searches for them near a streetlight because that's where the light is. With this talen, a drunk – or anybody who uses it – no longer needs the streetlight or even the park. This talen is a simple match, and it usually comes in a box or matchbook with four others of its kind. When lit, it will reveal to its user a vision of something he has lost or had stolen. If he dropped his keys under the couch, he'll see an image of the keys there. If his wallet was stolen, he'll see an image of where it is now, such as in the pocket of the crook who took it. When he strikes the match, he must speak the name of the object he's looking for: "my keys," "my wallet," etc. Note that the image won't necessarily reveal the exact location of the object, but there might be clues – the name of a Chinese take-out place seen over the shoulder of the crook who stole the wallet. The image disappears when the match burns out.

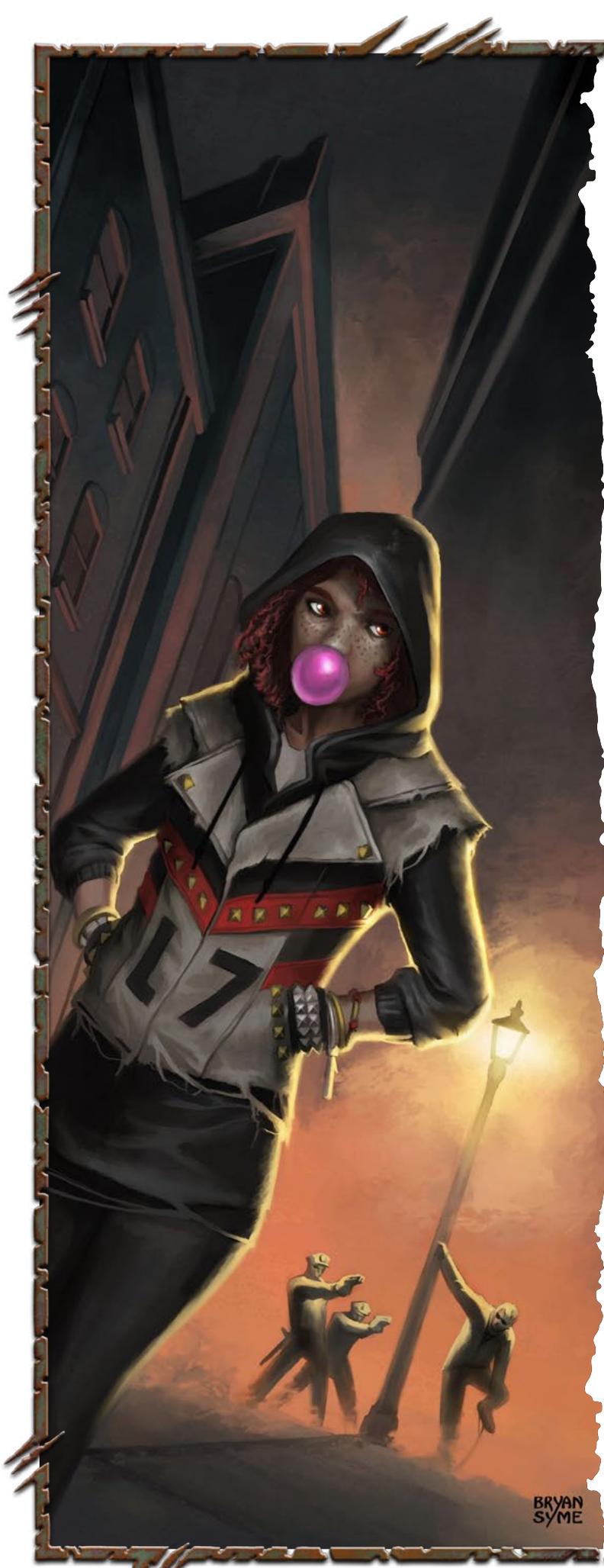
This talen holds a hawk or falcon spirit.

Fumblegum

Gnosis 6

This pack of five sticks of bubblegum has helped many a Kin (most often Bone Gnawer Kin) out of a jam. The Kin activates it by giving a stick a few chews. He then tosses it on the ground. It then winds up on the heel of anyone who is pursuing or following the Kin, even if he didn't walk directly over it. The pursuer must succeed in a Perception + Alertness roll to notice that he's got gum sticking to his foot. So long as the gum is stuck to him, he'll find it harder to catch up to his prey. Passersby will inadvertently block his way, delaying him; cops will stop him to question him; traffic will prevent him crossing the street in time. If he outright tries to run after the Kin, he must roll Dexterity + Athletics not to trip and fall. If he succeeds, the gum's effect ends. If he fails, the gum keeps working.

This talen is created by binding a rat or cockroach spirit.



Leaf of Grass

Gnosis 4

This is a broad-bladed tree leaf (despite its name) which, when laid over a Kinfolk's eyes, imparts to him the words of an original poem. That's it — a poem. But it is a very good poem, and if he were to recite it or publish it, he'd receive high accolades. A Galliard would be envious.

This talen holds an elemental spirit.

Spirit Shield

Gnosis 7

This talen resembles a small shield, about the size of a pendant, which can be worn around the neck. The user brings the talen to his lips to activate it and spends a point of Gnosis. The talen glows with a faint luminescence. This soft aura expands to surround the wearer, so that he, too, gives off a pale, unearthly light. All hostile non-Garou experience fear when they witness the aura and do not approach the wearer. Against Garou attackers, the talen has one of two effects. In order to attack the wearer, the Garou must roll Wits + Enigmas (difficulty of the talen's Gnosis rating). If the Garou succeeds, she may attack the wearer, but the talen absorbs up to 20 levels of damage before dissipating. If the Garou fails the roll, her attack will miss, no matter how many successes she rolls on her attack roll. The talen disappears when it absorbs all the damage it can or when the combat is over, whichever comes first.

This talen can only be used by a Kinfolk, since one of the Kinfolk's ancestor spirits is bound into the talen and will only protect one of its non-Garou descendants. Some Garou have several of these made for their Kinfolk if they anticipate the possibility of an attack. Kinfolk may also request these talens from a Garou kin if they know they will be fighting a Garou. This talen does not protect against the attacks of fomori or other Wyrms creatures.

Other Equipment

The items described below do not appear on standard lists of weapons or survival equipment. Starting Kinfolk characters need to purchase at least one dot in the Equipment Background to begin play with one or more of these items. Some of these may become available during play once the game begins. Other related Backgrounds or Abilities, such as the Streetwise Talent or the Contacts Background, may also be important for the character to have when attempting to purchase or acquire this equipment.

Silver Bullets

Silver bullets cause aggravated and unsoakable damage to Garou, depending on the breed and form of the werewolf when he takes damage. Because silver is fairly cheap and easy to work with, Kinfolk with the right equipment

and experience can make their own silver bullets at home or in their own workshop. Since they make great weapons against Black Spiral Dancers but can also harm Garou kin, any Kinfolk carrying silver bullets would be wise to explain to any friendly Garou their reason for carrying them.

Herbal Medicines

Garou and many Kinfolk generally recognize and respect herbal or folk healing. A packet of healing herbs from a skilled herbalist or herbal pharmacologist would serve as a useful addition to any Kinfolk's starting equipment. Storyteller and player should come up with the contents of any "herbal kit" chosen as part of a character's starting Equipment purchased through the Equipment Background. Herbs come in many forms: powders, teas, syrups, poultices, etc.

Aconite, or wolfsbane, is a deadly toxin. Even small doses can kill. Garou are susceptible to it — hence the name. For a character to start the game with this poison herb, she should have at least four dots in the Equipment Background. Storyteller and player must work out the circumstances under which the character acquired this substance and why it was necessary to do so.

Bugs

Bugs are listening or viewing devices. Although they may be of any shape or size, they are usually very small and easily concealable. Most need to be in the immediate vicinity of a conversation (i.e., in the same room) unless they are strong enough to hear through walls. A person can also wear a bug or a wire so others can monitor her conversation. Sometimes the listening devices also have cameras for visual espionage. Some are also equipped with recording devices. The more complex and powerful a device is, the higher the number of dots required in the Equipment Background.

White Noise Generators

These devices can be either very simple objects that generate a sound comparable to a strong fan or highly complex items that operate on a number of wavelengths to prevent remote as well as nearby eavesdropping. Werewolves in Lupus form, normal wolves, and specially trained dogs can hear certain types of white-noise generators and can track them to their source.

Nonlethal Weapons

Weapons don't have to do lethal damage to be effective against Garou. Tasers, which have gained in popularity as personal protection devices as well as standard issue for law enforcement officers, deliver a powerful but usually non-lethal electrical charge to its target. Likewise, pepper spray (of which "mace" is one variety) can seriously disrupt a Garou's senses without causing permanent physical damage.

Tasers come in two varieties. A hand-to-hand version requires the user to connect with the assailant with the taser's prongs. A long-range taser shoots out a pair of pronged wires that deliver a shock to the target. Since the prongs actually tear into flesh and cause actual damage, they are usually available only to law enforcement and other government agencies (or to Kinfolk who have access to those sources). While costs, voltage, and styles vary, the bottom line is that tasers serve as a successful deterrent against all but the most dedicated attackers.

Pepper spray, available in many forms, has become one of the most popular self-defense mechanisms for women who travel alone at night or in dubious neighborhoods. While the acrid, stinging sensations delivered by pepper spray tend to discourage most attackers from remaining in the vicinity of the user, for Garou the results can be disastrous on a temporary basis. Since Garou, particularly those in Lupus form, rely heavily on their sense of smell, the strong pepper gas throws off a Garou's olfactory senses sometimes for hours — never mind the other physical effects: watery eyes, sore throat, and harsh, raspy coughing. Pepper spray set loose inside a den or the home of Kinfolk can render the location uninhabitable until the gas dissipates, which may take hours or even days.

Wire of various kinds, including barbed wire or trip wires can also work as deterrents, especially when coated in silver-plate or spray. For that matter, a can of spray paint mixed with silver can provide a serious deterrent, and even cause lethal damage should it get into a Garou's blood stream via an open cut or wound.

As always, players must obtain Storyteller approval for any kind of non-standard, special weaponry.

Silencers

Silencers make a handy addition to many types of guns, even though they do not entirely silence a weapon. They do muffle the sound of gunshot and marginally slow down the speed of the bullet to just under the speed that would cause a break in the sonic barrier (with its resulting "boom!"). Silencers do not work well, if at all, on revolvers. The structure of the revolver makes covering the gap between the gun barrel and the gas releasing cylinders impossible. Multiple shots also wear down the effect of a silencer, which works best on a single-shot sniper's or executioner's weapon. An extremely talented gunsmith could make a nearly soundless weapon, but the result would be a permanently altered and highly illegal weapon.

Basic manuals on guns and ammunition, either in book form or on the internet, can provide useful information for roleplayers otherwise unfamiliar with firearms.

High Tech Gadgets

Beginning with computers and working up through smart phones, pads, tablets, digital notebooks, and highly sophisticated "spy stuff," the items in this category run the gamut from rela-

TOXICITY TABLES

EPA (U.S.A.)

| Level | Fatal Amt. | Effect | Warning Label |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Toxicity Class I | <5 gm | Most toxic | Danger – Poison (usually with skull & crossbones) |
| Toxicity Class II | 5-30 gm | Moderately toxic | Warning (followed by advisory phrase) |
| Toxicity Class III | >30 gm | Slightly toxic | Caution (advisory phrase) |
| Toxicity Class IV | – | No signal word required | Non-toxic |

EUROPEAN UNION

| Level | Label | Warning Label |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Class I | very toxic | European Toxicity Symbol |
| Class II | toxic | European Toxicity Symbol |
| Class III | harmful | |
| Class IV | corrosive | |
| Class V | irritant | |
| Class VI | corrosive | |
| Class VII | carcinogenic | |
| Class VIII | mutagenic | |

WHO (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION)

| Level | Label |
|--------------|----------------------|
| Class 1 | extremely hazardous |
| Class 2 | highly hazardous |
| Class 3 | moderately hazardous |
| Class 4 | slightly hazardous |

tively easily acquired (except, perhaps, for Bone Gnawers and Kin) to only available in experimental technological laboratories (i.e., the world of Glass Walkers). Ideas for these items can come from any number of recent movies and TV series and need Storyteller approval before including them in a chronicle. The Storyteller should decide which items require the Equipment Background and which to consider as standard issue. In many cases, smart phones and/or tablets could be acquired simply through having enough Resources to afford them.

Poisons

Poisons come in many varieties. Some, such as foxglove, hellebore, hemlock, nightshade, and mountain laurel, are herbal in nature. Others, such as bufotoxin (from the bufo toad), conotoxin (from the cone snail), or tetrodotoxin (from the puffer fish), come from the animal kingdom. Still others,

such as hydrogen peroxide, ethylene glycol (anti-freeze), sodium cyanide, and strychnine, exist primarily as refined substances, though ultimately they come from natural sources. In some cases, antidotes for poisons are themselves poisonous if taken without the substance they can neutralize.

Most poisons have a toxicity rating. Many poisons fill the shelves of hardware stores due to their uses as paint stripper, moth balls, antifreeze, detergents, pesticides and other home and garden products. Others, like snake or frog venom, sometimes exist in backyards and certainly exist in natural surroundings. Still others, such as weapons-grade toxins or radioactive poisons are illegal to possess (though not impossible to get hold of). Players wanting to start the game with some of the harder-to-obtain poisons need to spend points in the Equipment Background and possibly the Contacts Background as well.

Numina

Most mystical powers fall into the categories of Garou Gifts, Awakened Magic, Fey cantrips, vampiric Disciplines, or ghostly Arcanoi. The category of Numina (singular Numen) comprises those supernatural potentials that exist among mortals – humans who haven't had a First Change, an Awakening, an Embrace, or who have died and still linger beyond the lands of the living.

Though not as powerful or effective as those powers available to truly supernatural beings, Numina can often accomplish a lot. Some mortals naturally possess Numina, acquiring it at birth; usually, a relative had the reputation of having the “second sight” or being a “witch” or “medicine man.” Others learn them, usually in secret, after years of training.

Numina fall into three categories: hedge magic, psychic phenomena, and True Faith. Players use freebie points during character creation to purchase Numina. Later they may improve these abilities through experience points or, with Storyteller approval, learn new Numina. Having more than one type of Numina, however, is extremely rare. A talented psychic may possess Psychology and Animal Psi, both of which belong to the psychic phenomena category, but will rarely know any of the hedge magic paths.

Numina cost a lot to learn, and operate under different and, often, mutually exclusive paradigms. Learning too many mystical powers from disparate sources puts a strain on the character's mental health. See the following chart for costs for purchasing psychic phenomena and hedge magic with freebie points and for purchasing or raising them with experience point, True Faith increases only through Storyteller awards for good roleplaying.

Hedge magic encompasses different aspects of mystical ability, including Brewing (potions, etc.), Cursing, Healing, and Summoning. Each path has five ability levels as well as specialized rituals. Hedge magic differs from Awakened Magic because practitioners do not need to have an Awakened Avatar, only some innate ability to use their will to shape reality through the use of potions, rituals, and particular belief systems such as totemic magic, mountain hoodoo, and herbal magic. While more time-consuming than Awakened Magic due to its reliance on complicated casting rituals and complex preparation, hedge magic can accomplish some very powerful results.

The Way of Spirit Chasing, described below, is especially meaningful for Kinfolk hedge mages. Other Ways useful for Kinfolk appear in this section, including a Healing Way different from the psychic phenomenon form of healing described below.

Psychic phenomena involve the use of mental powers. People who possess psychic powers may have a reputation

for having “the second sight,” or for “dreaming true.” Characters with psychic abilities rarely possess more than one type, just as magically-gifted individuals rarely have more than one type of Numina. Each phenomenon has five levels of ability, with each level indicating greater effects than the one before. The psychic phenomena Empathic Healing and Soulstealing appear below.

Truth Faith mirrors a character's commitment to a spiritual belief system, such as Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, paganism, or just about any mortal faith that involves a transcendent deity or reality. This Numina's rating ranges from 1-10, with each level granting more powerful effects deriving from the character's Faith. True Faith is most powerful against the undead, but it also confers powers useful when fighting werewolves, mages, or changelings. It can also create miracles.

Hedge Magic Ways

A mystic's culture and belief system help guide her practice of hedge magic. Lifestyle, ethical code, favored foci, and methods of instruction determine the appearance and method of a hedge mage's power. A worker of Appalachian hoodoo magic might use very different gestures, foci, and special ingredients to work a healing magic than a medicine man or a voodoo priestess. The rituals all result in healing, but the look, form, smell, and feel of the actual workings are very different. Hedge magic tends toward a set pattern of actions, or ritual, and does not have the advantage of flexibility in casting that Awakened Magic has, but it still alters the way things are.

Hedge magic is cast through rituals. Each level in a hedge magic Way (also called a Path) describes a range of powers available at that level, but the hedge magician cannot simply cast these willy-nilly – she learns and casts *specific* effects through *specific* rituals, and can only use those effects for which she knows a ritual. For instance, two dots of Conjuring allow the hedge magicians to move objects or to teleport (“conjure”) them across a distance. Each type of object requires a separate ritual. A hedge magician who can pull rabbits from a hat cannot necessarily cause a coin to disappear from his hand to reappear in someone's pocket. He needs at least two separate rituals for these tricks.

Each time a student learns a new level, he receives a new ritual for that level. Thus, a character with two dots in a Way knows two rituals automatically. Storytellers and players can work together to create new rituals that suit their chronicles. Kinfolk hedge mages might have slightly different rituals than non-Kin practitioners.

Conjuration

The Way of Conjuration enables the hedge mage to move objects about from one place to another. They can pull rabbits out of hats (in truth), summon swords or other

weapons to hand, and, at the highest level, move a human or human-sized object without physically touching the target. Such objects must be prepared in advance using methods dictated by the caster's belief system. This can include sacrifices, ritual inscriptions, cleansing rituals, prayer, or some other means descriptive of the caster's beliefs.

Conjuration is a difficult type of hedge magic. The caster cannot choose just any item, but must use one already ritually prepared (and often carried on the caster's person until needed). A different ritual exists for every object or item, and the hedge mage cannot substitute one item in a ritual for a different item. For each level a hedge mage knows above the level required to move a particular object, the caster may move an additional object. For example, a hedge mage knowing two levels of Conjuration may move two objects of the size and kind described in level one.

Roll: Dexterity + Occult

Cost: 1 Willpower

- The caster can nudge a tiny object (coin, card, small knife) without touching it at a range of 10 feet or less. The contains no real force and anyone who picks up the item can prevent the caster from moving it.
- The caster can move a small, simple item, such as a book, a rope, a jar, or other similar object, or conjure (i.e., teleport) it across the intervening space. The range is up to 15 feet from the caster. To stop it, an individual must make a Strength roll, difficulty 5, to pick it up or otherwise stop it from moving.
- Large, complex objects such as swords, boom boxes, and laptops, or simple lifeforms such as snails, insects, or goldfish, are conjurable or movable by the caster. The mage can levitate the target, move it, or snatch it from thin air. The object must be no larger than a chair and must be within 25 feet. It can weigh as much as 200 pounds. Anyone wishing to stop it must make a Strength roll, difficulty 7.
- Now the caster can move, levitate, or summon a living mammal, reptile, bird, or other complex lifeform less than the mass of an adult human. Each type of animal requires a different ritual. Inanimate objects such as steamer trunks or small pianos can be targeted at this level. Maximum range is 50 feet.
- The caster can move or conjure a human or human-sized animal or object from up to 60 feet away, provided the living subject is willing or unconscious. This works best with a long-time partner who does not panic at the disorientation this causes. Botching this effect can be disastrous; at best it simply fails, but given a particularly bad failure it can cause serious injury or death.

Divination

Predicting the future, gaining insights into what is to come, or telling fortunes – the art of divination has stood as the hallmark of the magically or psychically gifted person. From the Delphic Oracle to modern day tarot readers, diviners hold a position of both awe and fear. People both want and dread to know what lies ahead for them.

Fortune-tellers crawl out of the woodwork, setting up shop in downtown storefronts, in middle-class neighborhoods, or via a flashy website. Most of them are fakers who occasionally hit the mark square on. The hedge magic Way of Divination, however, allows Kinfolk to part the veil between the spirit world and the material world so that they might read the threads of fate and see what outcomes are most likely. This ability makes diviner Kinfolk valuable to the Garou of their tribe as well as to their families.

A diviner may cast only one ritual per scene and must spend one Willpower point per casting. Viewing the future also grants the possibility to alter it if the diviner can see clearly where to tweak the threads of fate. Storytellers, of course, have the final say as to how useful or how detailed this ability can be.

Roll: Perception + Occult

Cost: 1 Willpower

- Fortune-telling: The most basic form of Divination, this level allows the user to gain a general sense of a person's future, for good or bad. Results usually involve symbolic or cryptic answers with many possible interpretations. Possible rituals include Ouija board readings, simple tarot readings relying on yes and no answers, coin flipping, and similar positive/negative methods. The difficulty for most rolls is 6.
- Dowsing: This level enables the diviner to find lost objects or people. The dowser should be familiar with the object or have a personal effect of the individual he seeks. Long-range dowsing usually involves holding the focus over a map; short range dowsing requires the caster to hold the focus in the air and follow the pull toward the presumed location. The number of successes determines the accuracy of the search. Ritual foci typically include pendulums or dowsing rods. Rituals might enable the dowser to discover treasure such as gold deposits, buried jewels, or other items, finding water (the most well-known form of dowsing), or locate missing people, such as kidnapped children or wandering adults. The difficulty for this type of divination varies according to the complexity of the situation.
- Augury: The user can determine the outcome of a particular future event, such as the success



or failure of a business venture, which army will win a particular battle, or what team will win the championship. Rituals include consulting the *I Ching*, chi readings, throwing the bones (or runestones), complex tarot readings, or even reading the entrails of an animal, as in certain religions. The difficulty for an augury dice roll is 7.

- Premonitions: At this level, dowsing becomes entwined with intuition. The Diviner receives visual flashes, dream-like visions, or strong feelings that indicate a possible event, such as sensing a particular plane is going to crash, or that someone unexpected will arrive. There are no rituals for this, but the player must still succeed in her roll. The Storyteller determines the difficulty as well as the form of the premonition.
- Vision Quest: The most advanced form of divination involves seeking for and receiving a detailed vision of the future, either concerning the diviner or someone he focuses his concentration on. The experience may not present itself in a linear fashion; details of the vision may not appear in order, enabling the caster to misinterpret parts of the vision. The number of successes determines the length and the amount of detail. Possible rituals take the form

of ascetic or ecstatic practices for altering the consciousness, such as fasting, sweat lodges, shamanic vision treks, or even such extreme practices as the Native American Sun Dance. Foci may include psychoactive substances, sage or incense burning, as well as other objects. The diviner enters another realm of consciousness, or, in the case of Kinfolk, may even gain visions of the Umbra.

Healing

By this Way, a hedge mage can heal many kinds of injuries and diseases, banish or control pain, and generally treat ills of all sorts. This Numen does not perform miracles (although it may seem to do so). Healing takes time, whether it involves injuries or disease. Healing is effective for relieving pain so long as the healer remains in contact with the sufferer. The healer can also reduce the likelihood of infection when working with a wound.

Practitioners of Healing hedge magic usually need some form of medical knowledge, whether it be dots in the Medicine Ability or non-traditional sorts, such as acupuncture, herbalism, shamanic healing, meditation, reiki, or some other form of medicine. Kinfolk who know veterinary medicine can use Healing magic to treat wolf Kinfolk. Use of this Path consumes the healer's energy and, without care, can

bring about burnout, or cause psychological damage to the healer. Healers often take care to get ample rest, practice relaxation techniques, and even seek psychological counseling when necessary.

This Numen cannot heal aggravated wounds, though it may ease the pain from such wounds.

Roll: Manipulation + Intuition

Cost: 1 Willpower per ailment

- This level allows a healer to soothe headaches, backaches, or equivalent pains. While the ailment does not go away, the pain backs off for a while. The number of successes dictates the length of time the pain relief lasts (as a guideline, a few hours per success).
- This level enables the healer to treat sprains, flu, migraines, minor infections, and the like. With multiple successes, the caster can cut the healing time in half or even better.
- At this stage, the healer can mend broken bones and spur nasty wounds to heal faster and without infection. Fractures do not immediately mend themselves, but they do take much less time to heal. Relief and healing for the common cold occur at this level. A Healer can help an Incapacitated character get back on her feet so she can move to a safe place, but she cannot completely heal wounds as bad as those.
- This level of Healing can fix compound fractures and severe trauma, speeding up the healing process and preventing infection. Such injuries heal 50% faster. The healer's touch also banishes pain. A healer of this level can also heal chronic diseases such as asthma, arthritis, diabetes, etc. The conditions do not disappear overnight, but take weeks. The cures last so long as the healed individual takes appropriate steps to avoid re-acquiring the disease.
- Through a great deal of effort, a healer at this level can cure the most serious diseases, including AIDS, cancer, heart disease and other "hopeless" ailments. Major traumatic injuries and broken bones heal in one to three weeks.

Herbalism/Brewing

The herbalist, or natural healer, has long occupied a place in folklore and in the culture of pre- or non-technological societies. In later history, the snake-oil salesman exploited for their own ends the trust many people once placed in non-traditional healers. Many herbalists – and many herbal con-artists – merely relied on recipes handed down through generations or conjured whole from their imagination to produce potions, ointments, tinctures, possets, and other herbal concoctions. These mixtures or brews

sometimes worked, when the herbs and other ingredients contained viable substances. Otherwise, they were just so much "snake oil."

The Way of hedge magic known as "herbalism" or "brewing" enables the practitioner to imbue natural ingredients with real power so that their natural healing (or poisoning) abilities achieve greater results. At the highest level of knowledge, these substances produce effects that border on the miraculous. The Garou treasure and protect these Kinfolk, valuing them for their ability to effect cures when normal means fail.

Kinfolk who study this herbal magic Numen must first have at least one dot in one of the following Knowledges: Herbalism, Medicine, or Science (botany). Naturally, the more dots in the appropriate Knowledge, the greater the probability of success. Using this Path requires time and effort, as the practitioner must find and gather, or grow, the proper herbs, flowers, roots, or mosses. In addition, preparing potions or other herbal concoctions takes time involved in boiling, steeping, crushing, or otherwise transforming the ingredients into the required mixture.

The strength and effectiveness of the mixture depends on the herbalist's successes (Intelligence + Herbalism). One success produces something that marginally works but may look foul and taste bitter, or worse. With four or more successes, the concoction not only succeeds but does so with twice as much effectiveness – and tastes delicious, to boot!

Of course, herbalism also allows for the concoction of poisons. Those who ingest such poisons or mixtures with harmful effects may attempt a Stamina roll against the herbalist's successes to resist or survive the effects.

Players and Storyteller should devise their own rituals for making the herbal mixtures depending on the herbalist character's cultural background or the needs of the chronicle.

Roll: Intelligence + Herbalism

Cost: none

- The poultices or brews made at this level can cure minor aches or rashes, induce or prevent sleep, preserve foods longer than their normal freshness, relieve symptoms of non-chronic illnesses, and produce other effects that would not fall under the category of "magic."
- At this level, the herbalist's products quickly cure minor illnesses or pains, avert or enable pregnancy (100% certainty), alter a person's mood, attract or deter insects or animals, cure intoxication, and produce other effects that seem miraculous, but not necessarily supernatural.
- The substances made at this level can put people to sleep with just a pinch, cure moderate pains and illnesses, cut healing time in half for open wounds and broken bones (more for Garou), put

partakers in light trances or elevate the libido, and cause other effects that may raise eyebrows due to their speed and effectiveness.

- This level of mastery enables the herbalist's concoctions to clear up an infection in minutes, cure life-threatening illnesses, neutralize poisons, temporarily increase someone's physical traits (one or two dots to Strength, Dexterity, or Stamina for one scene), and other equivalent effects. Cultural expectations and Storyteller judgment play a part in the effects, which are neither sudden, flashy, nor permanent.
- At this level, the herbalist produces truly spectacular potions, brews, balms, and the like. Love potions, sleeping concoctions, healing balms, deadly poisons, oils of flying, and other seemingly impossible mixtures enable the user to alter her reality for at least a little while, or, in the case of poisons and healing medicines, permanently. The truth of the matter should remain open to discussion and have a plausible explanation behind it. Extreme effects, such as changing forms, should not occur instantly, but should take effect subtly or over time.

Spirit Chasing

This Way enables a hedge mage to create a bond between herself and a chosen type of plant or animal. Those who practice this Way believe, not unlike the Garou, that every living thing possesses a soul or animating spirit.

A spirit chaser uses her bond to watch and learn from her chosen animal or plant. Unlike the process of learning Gifts, no bargain exists between animal/plant teacher and student. The practitioner starts by contacting the spirit and simply watching it. Next, she asks questions of the spirit and tries to mimic its natural abilities. After this, the spirit chaser devises a private ritual in which she pleads with the spirit, requesting it to appear. When this happens (and it can take a very long time), the spirit chaser explains that she would like to learn its ways. For example, a spirit chaser choosing a bear spirit would ask to learn the ways of bears. The spirit might require some kind of proof of sincerity or a quest undertaken to prove the spirit chaser's worth, but if it agrees, it allows the spirit chaser to learn the basics of living like the chosen creature.

As learning progresses, the hedge mage learns to focus her senses to see as her animal does. She might even learn special activities, such as a bear's ability to hibernate or a lion's ability to use claws. This Way is unique to every practitioner.

Note that this Numen does not provide the ability to see, hear, touch, or summon spirits. It does provide a degree of intuitive communication with a chosen spirit type, such that queries might be answered by a gentle breeze, the snap of a twig,

or even the brief appearance of the spirit's type of animal or plant, and the spirit chaser intuitively understands the meaning of such responses. Others would easily interpret it as being all in the spirit chaser's imagination, but she knows better. At higher levels of awareness, it's even possible that a spirit might like the spirit chaser enough to materialize before her now and then, or use other Charms that signal its direct presence.

Roll: Manipulation + Occult

Willpower cost: 1 point

- The mystic learns to "eat" the food of the chosen spirit. The proper food needs to be available (water and sun for plants; pasturage for herbivores such as cows or deer; grubs, honey, berries, etc. for bears; raw meat for wolves or other predators). She receives full nutrition from this food as if she were her chosen animal. Rituals might involve cud chewing, squirreling food away to eat later, burying food, and so forth.
- The spirit chaser can match his own sensory levels to his animal. For example, a lynx might allow the spirit chaser to see in the dark or sniff out predators or prey. Scenting humans, sniffing out a trail, finding food, or "reading" the air are some of the rituals that might accompany this level.
- Animals and plants know how to survive and what to do when they need healing. Plants "heal" by means of photosynthetic energy, while some animals lick their wounds, or fall into a healing sleep. The vibrational rate of a feline's purr seems to have some healing properties as well. Each year, for some part of the winter, some creatures hibernate; temperatures are cold and food is scarce, so hibernation is a type of self-induced coma to insure survival. At this level, a spirit chaser may fall into a healing sleep which heals one Health Level for each success rolled on Spirit Chasing. With three successes, the spirit chaser could heal three levels after 12 hours of sleep. Rituals include hiding, healing, cleansing & purging venomous or poisonous wounds, and childbirth.
- At this level, the spirit chaser received the inner wisdom of the chosen animal or plant spirit. Based on the level of success on a roll to use this level of power, the Storyteller decides how much and what sort of information provided to the spirit chaser. An oak spirit might give the spirit chaser insight into an event that happened when the oak was a sapling. A wolf spirit might give the caster knowledge of something affecting the survival of wolves in a particular part of the world. The Storyteller can make use of this power to give story hooks to the characters. Rituals might include seeking visions, detecting lies or making intuitive leaps.

•••• The most committed and dedicated spirit chasers may attain this advanced level of mastery. Here, the spirit chaser receives the ability to practice some aspect unique to its bonded animal or plant spirit. She might, if bonded to a deer, be able to run especially quickly or leap high fences. A practitioner bonded to a bear might call on great strength; one bonded to a lion might grow claws for battle. Certain plants might give the caster skin that could be poisonous to the touch. At least three successes are necessary to invoke this ability, which is the closest a Kinfolk may come to experiencing the Garou's shapechanging ability. Possible rituals may involve shielding, through growing a thick coat of hair or tree bark; offensive powers, such as growing sharp, strong fingernails; scaling a vertical surface as a spider might; and other abilities.

Psychic Phenomena

Some call it ESP or Psi; others refer to it as "witchery," "the sight," or even just use the word "weird" to describe people with these paranormal abilities. Kinfolk who demonstrate any of these abilities meet with many different responses from their Garou relations. Some find it interesting, worthy of respect, or potentially useful to the tribe. Others do not trust it, seeing too much of mage-craft or dark magic in it. Most Theurges, some Fianna, and the entire Silent Strider and Stargazer tribes seek to learn more about Psychic Phenomena in general and sometimes consult known Kinfolk practitioners for their knowledge.

Empathic Healing (Charisma + Empathy)

This power comes at great cost to the practitioner, and is one of the most intimate of the Psi powers. To use it, the healer joins his mind and body with that of the injured or sick person. The healer then absorbs the wound or illness into his own body, taking the same number of Health Levels he heals as damage to his own body. Empathic healers can repair aggravated wounds through this method, making them extremely valuable to Garou and Kinfolk alike. The downside, of course, is that it may take many months for the healer to heal himself after such an extreme healing. In most cases, the Empathic Healer has a companion to care for him during his own healing process. Although a healer could push himself too far through overuse of this ability, Garou Gifts such as Mother's Touch can help him heal more quickly.

Each level requires at least three successes on a Charisma + Empathy roll to take effect; successes may be cumulative, but puts additional stress upon the healer. The base difficulty is 6, but increases by 1 per level of Empathic Healing beyond the first one. The difficulty, therefore, is 7 at level two, 8 at level three, 9 at level four, and 10 at level five.

Roll: Charisma + Empathy

Cost: Special

- **Soothe the Spirit:** The healer can absorb minor bruises, simple depression, or grief. She can heal damage at the Bruised Health Level. Her own body recovers within a day. Difficulty: 6.
- **Knit Flesh:** The healer can heal deep cuts and stop loss of blood. Hurt and Injured Health Levels heal. Her own body takes about a week to regain her strength after using this level. Difficulty: 7.
- **Mend Bones:** The healer can heal massive wounds or serious acute illnesses (not cancer). Wounded and Mauled Health Levels disappear from the subject as the empath mends shattered bones and torn ligaments, tendons and muscle. The healer may take several months to heal without the help of Gifts or other magic. Difficulty: 8.
- **Organ Repair:** The healer can repair severe internal injuries, stop internal bleeding, and even bring her patient back from the brink of death. Crippled and Incapacitated Health Levels fall to the healer's expertise. The healer requires a minimum of a year to heal naturally. Difficulty: 9
- **Pacify Madness:** Only the best of the best attain this level of Empathic Healing, and only those who are certain of their abilities dare use the power granted here. A healer who uses this power must have complete mental discipline, courage, and control of her own emotions. This ability allows the healer to absorb the worst forms of mental illness, including Harano, falling into the same state of psychosis as she has just healed in her patient. Many months of rest and counseling may ultimately heal the Empathic Healer, but a few never recover from this ordeal. Difficulty: 10.

Soulstealing

This disturbing power enables a psychic to forcibly enter the victim's subconscious and destroy pieces of the personality. Ultimately, Soulstealing reduces the victim to a shell of his former self, devoid of Willpower and stripped of any Gnosis he might have. Soulstealing doesn't cause insanity; the victim's mind is too empty to be insane. Most practitioners of this power belong to Black Spiral Dancer Kinfolk, but a few other dangerous or unhappy Kinfolk have been known to possess it. Some Shadow Lord Kin seek knowledge of this power in order to build their own power base within their tribe. Kinfolk who know Soulstealing generally keep their knowledge to themselves and use it carefully, knowing that the punishment for possessing this Numen would be extremely harsh — if not fatal.

To use Soulstealing, the psychic makes a Willpower roll (difficulty equals the target's Willpower + 2, with a maximum

of 10) and spends a Willpower point. The victim must be in the psychic's line of sight.

Victims usually do not remember the incident unless the Storyteller allows them a Perception + Enigmas roll (difficulty equals the psychic's Willpower) to notice the process. If the target actively resists, the difficulty of the Soulstealing increases by 1 (up to a maximum of 10).

A Soulstealer may attempt to use this power once per scene on any living being. Stargazers have some lore that speaks of Soulstealers who lost their minds after attempting to tangle with a vampire or a wraith.

Roll: Willpower

Cost: 1 Willpower

- **Dream Invasion:** The psychic enters the victim's dreams and interacts with the subconscious. He cannot plant or steal memories, but can participate in the dream as an "actor," remembering what he sees.
- **Will Sapping:** Each success allows the psychic to drain a temporary point of Willpower and transfer it to himself (up to his maximum). The victim recovers Willpower in the usual way.
- **Drain Vital Essence:** Every two successes drain one Health Level from the victim. The wounds are not aggravated; the victim recovers normally. Because the damage is mental, rather than physical, the victim appears unwounded.
- **Shift Life:** Every two successes enable the psychic to transfer one of the victim's Health Levels to his own body, giving him an extra Bruised Health Level. Alternately, the psychic can use the stolen Health Level to heal one of his own lost Health Levels. The Soulstealer may add up to twice the normal number of Health Levels (up to seven).
- **Gnosis Theft:** For every two successes, the psychic may steal and keep one point of Gnosis, retaining it until it is spent. Even if the psychic does not possess the Merit: Gnosis, he may use the stolen Gnosis to power Gifts or use fetishes. Once it is

used, it does not return. The Soulstealer must steal more if he wants it.

True Faith

Some Kinfolk have a strong attachment to their spiritual nature. They enjoy a deep-seated, unshakeable love for and devotion to the divine, whether they call it Gaia, God, or some other form of higher power or supreme entity. For them, there exists a bedrock upon which all things rest and which they can touch, at times, through the virtue of their belief. They connect with that power, especially in times of stress or urgent need, and draw strength and, occasionally, tangible effects from expressions of their Faith.

Kinfolk characters with this Numen start out with one dot of True Faith, which ranges from 1-10.

True Faith adds to Willpower rolls in critical situations, adding +1 to the dice pool for each point of Faith. It does not add to rolls used for rites, Gifts, Psychic Phenomena, Hedge Magic, or similar abilities.

The Storyteller determines the effects of True Faith, depending on the situation. True Faith may repel vampires or wraiths. The player must succeed on a Faith roll against a difficulty of the opponent's Willpower. True Faith protects from the powers of mages. Each point acts as a die of countermagic.

Those Kinfolk with True Faith in Gaia might be able to repel Wyrms creatures and those suffering the taint of the Wyrms, in the same manner as with vampires and wraiths.

Kinfolk may gain an additional point of temporary Willpower per point of True Faith due to their devotion. At higher levels, True Faith may have effects that seem miraculous to others: healing a Health Level to prevent someone from dying, receiving a second chance to attempt a difficult action if the first attempt fails horribly, having some sort of fortuitous intervention occur when all seems lost, or some effect of a level consistent with the Kinfolk's Faith rating.

True Faith does not increase through the spending of experience points. The Storyteller may award extra points in True Faith based on the character's actions.



RECORDS

BRIAN
ESBANE

Chapter Four: Storytelling Kinfolk Chronicles

“WE ARE NOT THINGS”

Mad Max: Fury Road

We’ve been telling stories about families for as long as we’ve been telling stories. Everyone understands the power of stories about familial bonds, whether by blood, adoption, or marriage. What happens when you test the bonds that have grown weak by neglect? What happens when the blood is a shackle tying people to others who hurt them? When filial duty is set against romantic love, which wins out? When two families go to war, can anyone get out unscathed?

We write countless variations on these stories. Shakespeare alone gives us a faltering patriarch and his daughters, two teenagers whose families are at bloody war, a man whose bloody ambition is driven by his wife, a son who despises his mother’s new husband – act after act and scene after scene of love and pain and obligation. Take a look at any bookshelf and consider the Bennetts and Cratchits, the Karamazovs and Ingalls, House Baratheon and the House of Usher. Flip through a streaming service and see how many films and ongoing TV shows center on a family; even if you leave out the sitcoms, the number’s staggering. You could do worse than model a Kin family on the Corleones or Barksdales. Consider history: Tudor and York, Medici and Borgia, Oda and Takeda, Cao and Sima, Hatfield and McCoy.

There are a number of challenges inherent in telling stories about Kinfolk and their relationships with their bloody, bestial Garou lovers, and children, and parents. Thankfully, a lack of ideas will never be one of them.

Kinfolk and Chronicles

The Garou/Kinfolk dynamic turns traditional family relationships on its ear. Kinfolk are parents, spouses, siblings, children, cousins, aunts and uncles, and beyond – but the power differential between them inverts a lot of traditional roles. Once a cub Changes, they hold more power than any Kin. Children wind up protecting their own parents. If a healthy emotional connection is there, the Garou is given a fascinating amount of responsibility towards their entire family. And if the emotional connection is unhealthier or abusive, things could get horrific quickly.

The trick with Kinfolk is triggering that emotional connection in the players. Most people have pretty strong opinions about their families, for better or for worse. The same should be true for player characters. To really play a meaningful role in a chronicle, Kin need to be by turns helpful and vulnerable, characters with ambitions of their own who can’t ignore their

bonds with the Garou. It's work to make them more than disposable spear-carriers, but the work pays off in spades.

Themes

There are plenty of themes to explore with a Kin-focused chronicle. Some will be suggested by the tribal cultures involved, but these three should be universal.

- **Blood Is Thicker than Water:** When asked to choose between family and friends or lovers, the idea is that family should come first. In practice it doesn't always work out like that, but filial duty is even more important for Kin. They're supporting a war effort. If the family falls apart, everyone they care about is in horrible danger of death or worse. What's more, Kinfolk with werewolf blood (or those of other strongly social shifters) feel an extra nudge of territorial kinship. Outsiders tend to see Kin families as intimidating: clannish, short-tempered, and everyone knows if you pick a fight with one you pick a fight with all of them.

- **You Can't Pick Your Family:** Nobody ever asked to be born into the war for the Final Times. This holds double for Kinfolk. Who would want to be tied to a parent or lover possessed by Rage? A wolf-blooded family is stuck with each other, no matter how bad it gets. Sure, there are runaways. But there are also stories about horrible things that happen to lone Kin without their clan to look out for them. A lot of these stories are sadly true.

- **Mortal Legacy:** The Garou have a lot of ways to linger on beyond their death. With Renown, their deeds may be remembered for ages. They might craft powerful fetishes or discover new rites. They might even come back as ancestor-spirits. But shapeshifters and Kinfolk alike can't forget about the next generation. Even in the Final Times, there's still the hope that there will be more children and grandchildren, ones who might inherit a world where the Apocalypse is past. **Werewolf** is a fatalistic game, but Kinfolk stories really put the possibility of a future front and center.

Mood

The mood of a Kinfolk-focused chronicle varies depending on the family; some might be morbid, others celebratory in the face of doom. But most run heavy on tension and vulnerability. A Kin family has all the stresses of any other, and then some. Parents worry about the future of their children, who might die horribly just for being born who they are. Children inherit the fears of their parents. The Veil casts a curtain of alienation between kenning clans and ordinary people. Kinfolk have to rely on each other against a world of dangers, and their Garou relatives won't always be there to do the fighting. In fact, their Garou relatives are one of the dangers. There are of course bright spots here and there, moments of idyll and celebration. But the tension hanging over a Kinfolk family can't truly vanish until the war's over. Which is to say, it probably won't end until the world does.

THE DUTY OF PROCREATION

To be honest, many of the possible considerations surrounding the Garou necessity to breed are revolting. It's very easy to put together stories where Kin are presented as having very limited, or even no real reproductive freedom. It can wind up looking like *The Handmaid's Tale*, albeit with the added possibility of male Kin chattel and female Garou authorities. (Not that this makes things any better.)

This is by rights a sensitive topic. Respect your players' feelings on the matter; if they have no interest in playing through a harsh take on the subject matter, don't press it. A story about Kinfolk is powerful only if the players *want* to play through forming bonds with their Kin. You can have a more positive and compassionate take on the Garou's relationship with their relatives and still have a game that's recognizably **Werewolf**. Loving one's family is not so uncommon, even in the World of Darkness.

Storytelling Kin Characters

Kinfolk are excellent supporting cast members in a lot of ways. They have little chance of stealing the spotlight from shapeshifters; they have the immediate "in" of being family; they have an engaging mix of competence and vulnerability. They're excellent at filling in the corners of a chronicle. Where rival packs and elder Garou provide large and dramatic brushstrokes, Kin can be used as softer detail work to flesh out the canvas.

When portraying kenning Kin, remember that most are conflicted to some degree. Loyalty to the family wars with the knowledge that they're risking everything to stand by their terrifying relatives. They might be a little afraid of the player characters, even if they love them. It's how they deal with this conflict that measures them. Let the players see hints of that conflict. They may appreciate and empathize with the Kinfolk more if they see that it's not *easy* to overcome that fear, but their relatives do it anyway.

Like all other Storyteller characters, Kin are expendable. Don't pull strings to keep a pet character alive just because you really like playing him or have big plans for his future. Kinfolk can play the role of dramatic casualties much as other horror supporting cast members might. That said, killing off beloved

Storyteller characters just to shock the players is a limited gambit. You can only do it so often before they get jaded, or worse. The last thing you want is for players to refuse forming any bonds with Kin out of fear that you'll just use those bonds to get at them. Wield your executioner's axe with discretion.

Lupus Kin

Players who take the Kinfolk Background can define some of their Kin as wolves, and a sept may have a Kin wolf pack or three nearby. But this doesn't mean that the characters get access to super-intelligent, loyal wolves. Wolf Kin are still just wolves — wolves that have a higher chance of breeding Garou offspring, and that react better to Garou than other wolves might, but they don't become capable of abstract thought or language.

Wolf Kin are universally callow. They're capable of recognizing some Garou as friends — more specifically, as relatives in some unspecified way — but they know no more about the Wyrms or Umbra than any other animal would. At best, they can be trained to seek safety in specific Garou-protected lands or give a specific howl if they're in trouble. They aren't very *useful* as Kin allies go, but it's characterful and cool to have wolf relatives around. Reason enough.

Kinfolk Allies

When a player drops some Background points on Kinfolk, it's to pick up friends and allies who already know about the secret war against the Wyrms. They aren't generally as capable as actual Allies and Contacts, but they come in more numbers. It can be useful to have a vanload of people who'll help you drag away some fomori bodies in the middle of the night.

Some Kin are more than just extra helping hands and trigger fingers, though. A particularly helpful Kinfolk might be purchased through Allies or Contacts, or be the standout of the 20 friends and relatives gained through Kinfolk••••. And players can get help from skilled and useful Kin without spending any Background points. The Background just means the players can invoke contact reliably. There's nothing stopping you from providing a wise Kin historian with a lot of useful information who tends to show up when needed but not when called.

Ally archetypes come in a lot of flavors, and a given character can fill more than one.

- **The Teacher:** A Kin who has access to information the player characters don't. They might be a trusted historian, master of a given Ability, or an instructor in social graces. Some Kin are dedicated to teaching lupus Garou how to pass as humans, or raise metis cubs in place of the actual shamed parents.

- **The Support:** This is an all-purpose role, that can cover anything from providing transportation to scoring illegal goods to putting up a place to crash. Mostly it covers manual labor or material goods. It can range anywhere from a Glass Walker's chauffeur to a talented silversmith weaponer.

- **The Cleaner:** These Kin are dedicated to preserving the Veil. They might hide bodies and tidy up crime scenes, or they might alter security tapes, purge information from the Web, or "lose" police records.

- **The Sentinel:** A role necessitated by the Garou's lack of numbers, sentinel Kin watch potential problem areas that their werewolf cousins can't. They might have a simple post such as watching the road approaching a caern. Some might be scientists like seismologists, keeping an eye out for abstract disturbances. The Uktena usually post Kin sentinels where they know bound Banes lie sleeping.

- **The Informer:** A player can learn a lot with a Streetwise or Politics roll. The Informer is someone who spends most of their time making rolls of that nature, so to speak. They might keep their eye on human politics, or organized crime; they might have infiltrated a Pentex subsidiary; or they might know a thing about local vampires or other supernatural entities.

- **The Scout:** The Garou are usually much better at the role, but a capable Kin scout can sometimes go places a werewolf can't. Plus, they're more expendable. This is especially true in social situations, where a Kinfolk can slip into a stressful environment without danger of frenzy.

- **The Love Interest:** Potential love interests are "useful" in the long-term sense of producing kids. But they drive stories, and the more dynamic ones simultaneously fulfill other roles. For a longer look at running romantic subplots, see *Love and Romance*, pp. 93-95.

Enemy Kin

Kinfolk make dangerous enemies. They're not as resilient as Black Spiral Dancers or even fomori, but they have an inside track. Even callow Kin can be dangerous, if they know enough to pack silver. But kenning enemies know just how the Garou operate, what might draw them into a trap, and where they're least defended.

A band of enemy Kin is more of a mental or social challenge than a physical one. Only the best-equipped, best-trained Kin can go toe-to-toe with a pack; and even then they dearly need the element of surprise. It's a little like a Batman story: there's no question Batman can beat the tar out of the Joker one-on-one, it's the struggle to identify and disarm the Joker's plots before they culminate. Kinfolk enemies want the conflict to go like a hunt, picking the terrain to their advantage, using the best weapons they can get, and doing everything they can to drop their targets before the beasts close with them. Garou going up against a dedicated Kin enemy will have to deal with false trails, traps, distractions, flash-bangs and tear gas, and of course, plenty of silver.

The best Kin antagonists come from within. It gets more personal if a wolf-hunting band has members from the player characters' own bloodlines. Even better, they can have an

effect on the chronicle before they're ever introduced. A character's mother has a long scar on her arm – and then her brother rolls back into town. A love interest joined the sept recently, fleeing troubles from back home – then his parents show up demanding to bring him home, and won't take no for an answer. And when the pack finally catches them, is tearing them apart going to solve the problem, or substitute a new trauma for their loved ones?

The most dangerous Kinfolk ever to oppose the Garou are the Skin Dancers. These disgruntled Kin turned skimmers and skinchangers are detailed more on pp. 105-106.

Family Archetypes

Memorable families in fiction usually have some kind of "gimmick" to them. You have a diverse group of individuals, but there's a theme that binds them all together. If you're in need of a quick idea to bring a family into question, here's a number of classic archetypes. For added utility, think about pairing them with something other than the obvious tribe; a group of snooty New England blue-bloods might be more interesting as Children of Gaia Kin than as Silver Fang family.

Rich as Sin: WASPish American old money; modern-day aristocracy; captain of industry's dissipated heirs; tech industry new money; crime boss' household

Dirt Poor: Clannish rural backwoods; struggling urban poor; single-parent household; homeless drifters; jobless suburbanites; children moving away in search of better work

Family Business: Police and rescue workers; medical; criminal; farmers; ranchers; wilderness rangers; old-school crafters; teachers; ministry; miners; dockworkers

Faded Glory: American Deep South antebellum heritage; aristocrats on brink of losing holdings; old names marrying new money; younger generation abandoning older; decaying New England upper crust; run-down family homestead

Immigrants: Assimilated for generations; fresh off the boat; separated from parent tribe; insistent on Old Country traditions; hungry to assimilate into new culture; fleeing a lost tribal territory; scattered but in touch

Dark Secrets: Ruthless patriarch/matriarch; bloodline curse; incestuous; abusive; tainted ancestor; ties with vampire clan or worse; haunted; history of cannibalism; kinslayers

Kinfolk Chronicles

Games focusing on Kinfolk as player characters hit a number of the same themes of family and obligation. Keep these facts of life in mind as you plan.

Harsh Dooms: The Garou are made to fight a bloody war. Death is such a part of their existence that the most one can hope for is to die well. Kinfolk aren't called to the front lines as often, but on the downside they may well be considered more expendable.

KENNING OR CALLOW?

We assume that the vast majority of Kinfolk games involve kenning families. It allows for more player resources (such as Garou allies and perhaps some spiritual power). It permits more diversity, when multiple Kin bloodlines can recognize one another and work together for a mutually understood good. It's certainly easier not to have to play ignorant.

All that said, a game featuring callow Kin can be a lot of fun as well. It's something like playing a prelude, where the player characters start out ignorant and then have the World of Darkness come crashing through their windows. It could be a one-shot story, or grow into something more. Certainly by the end of that first story, the family isn't likely to be callow any more.

While Kin aren't called on to venture into Hives or roam the Umbra, they still suffer from being on the bad side of the power imbalance. They die much easier. They have fewer resources; bank accounts and social contacts can pale by comparison to spirit allies, Gifts, rites, and fetishes. And for all that, they still have the same enemies. If the Wyrms' forces raid a caern, they don't care about if it's a fair fight. It might be well-trained spec op forces, fomori, or even Black Spiral Dancers given the task of slaughtering or capturing the bloodline.

Interlocking Families: A Kinfolk game is easier to orchestrate when all the player characters hail from the same family. In practice, players tend to like a little more variety. If the troupe's characters are multiracial, there needs to be a reason for them to work with each other rather than their own families. One reason might be a shared support role for the sept: a cleaning squad for Garou activities, shared access to a secret library, chosen representatives of their families, membership in a subaltern pack (see p. 13) or Kin Fellowship (see pp.27-31). Or they might gather thanks to a mortal institution: all enrolled at the same college, for instance.

Outside Perspective: A lot of Garou existence is off-limits to Kinfolk. They might never see the inside of a caern their family's guarded for generations. They almost certainly will never see the Penumbra, much less the strange abstract realms beyond. But at the same time, Kinfolk see things their werewolf relatives miss. They can pick up on subtler threats in places where the Garou don't go, or note a neighbor's strange behavior over time.

Mixed Player Groups

The massive power gap between Kinfolk and shapeshifters isn't something that can be mechanically balanced. Arguably, it shouldn't be; if the Kin could reach the equal of the Changing Breeds, the war would be going a lot better. But as a Storyteller, you can balance spotlight time. If every player gets to contribute and has a little time to be the focus of roleplay, then it shouldn't matter if the Kin characters can't stand shoulder-to-shoulder against the Black Spiral Dancers.

When you're trying to keep spotlight time equitable, consider situations where some characters are more useful than others, but where all characters are in some way present. Not all groups enjoy balancing the spotlight by having only one person interacting with the Storyteller for twenty minutes, then letting the next player have another twenty-minute solo session. Garou can tag along to social encounters where the people without Rage have to do most of the talking; Kinfolk can take part in a hunt, even if they have to move slower with only two legs.

When we talk balance, we often speak in terms of combat. A fight is, by default, an area where theoretically every character contributes to a single goal, and spotlight time is measured out by initiative counts and turn order. Characters without much to contribute to a fight don't get as much out of their turn in the spotlight. And it's not a lot of fun to sit around and watch other people play. (Though there are exceptions. Some players are very content to spend most of their time watching their friends ham it up, and are satisfied with less active participation.)

So if you want to level things out a bit, what to do? For one, consider ways that Kin might participate in fights without getting shredded. This may be as simple as encouraging them to fight at range from cover while the shapeshifters tear things up hand-to-talon. There's also remote communications, technological or spiritual. We've included a couple of new maneuvers that allow weaker characters to contribute to a fight, actively swaying the results without necessarily throwing around bullets, claws, and klaives themselves.

Support Maneuvers

The following maneuvers are like combat maneuvers, but focus on spending your own actions to aid another's. They can be used by anyone with a clear view of the battle and the ability to communicate with a teammate. Because they rely on focused attention, they can't be used in conjunction with powers like Rage or Celerity that grant extra actions. But they can also be used remotely, allowing a Kinfolk to play eye-in-the-sky in a meaningful way.

- **Spot Target:** The character keeps careful watch on an enemy, and calls out where his guard is weak. The player designates a particular enemy and a packmate to assist, then

rolls Perception + Brawl, Melee, or Firearms, depending on his chosen packmate's method of combat. The difficulty is equal to the enemy's Wits + Athletics. If the roll is successful, on the chosen packmate's next action, she receives an extra die to her dice pool involving the relevant Ability, plus an additional die for every three successes on the spot target roll. This bonus can be used only to attack the designated enemy.

- **Call Defense:** The character watches over an ally, warning her of enemies on any flank. The player designates a packmate to watch over, and rolls Perception + Leadership (difficulty 8). The ally gains one die to defensive actions (block, dodge, and parry) taken for the next turn, plus one additional die for every three successes on the call defense roll. These dice can be used only to defend against enemy attacks that the spotter can see — if the spotter misses an invisible Ragabash, the ally can't use these dice to dodge the sneaky New Moon's attack.

Fera Kinfolk Stories

Running a game focusing on the Fera and/or their Kin can be even trickier. The challenge of representing multiple families in a multitribal chronicle expands dramatically when you might have shapeshifters from entirely different Breeds in your group. The families of a Ratkin, a Rokea, a Nuwisha and a Simba can easily pull the themes in four different directions. It's admittedly *possible* to have a single family with so many Kin bloodlines running through it that they have shifter children of different Breeds — but that's seriously improbable, given that multiple Fera bloodlines is the exact opposite of Pure Breed.

Some Fera have kenning families that behave somewhat like Garou Kin families might, and are therefore a little easier to handle. This is particularly true of Ajaba, Gurahl, Mokolé, some Corax, and some of the Bastet tribes such as Simba and Swara. Others tend toward callow bloodlines, especially the secretive Breeds such as Ratkin and Nagah, or the more solitary Breeds such as most Bastet.

Mixed Fera groups tend to stress a chronicle theme of diversity rather than tight family bonds, so it'll be more work to stress the themes inherent to Kin stories. Stories heavily featuring Fera Kin might focus on the scattered nature of their families, or chance encounters and adoptive bonds.

For a mixed Changing Breeds Kinfolk game, you probably want to enforce an additional structure for the group: the group finds each other in pursuit of a specific legendary fetish, they were all captured and escape imprisonment together, an enigmatic spirit gathered them together, or the like. A bit of structure beyond coincidence makes things logistically easier on you, and may give the game a memorable focus.

Sample Story Hooks

- **Unwanted Suit:** Someone in the family has an undesirable suitor. Could be a simple matter of being from



the wrong bloodline – but this time it’s not that easy. The wooer might be another shifter, a subtle thrall of the Wyrms, a supernatural being such as a vampire, even an incarnate spirit. Or the wooed party’s in danger of spilling family secrets. Or both. But the suitor has strong connections, making a “disappearance” likely to cause even more trouble.

- **Fenris Wants Grandchildren:** At least one of the characters is feeling strong pressure to take a mate. Not just from the family – from spirits representing the tribal totem, who allegedly has some sort of *plan* in mind. However, the proposed candidates aren’t even mortals. They’re spirits, and the wooing is an Umbral quest. Is this a symbolic marriage to complete a grand ritual, or does the totem actually expect half-spirit progeny? And how much say do the characters have?

- **Rotten at the Top:** The family patriarch or matriarch is growing senile. They’re making terrible decisions, and starting to break the family apart. But this isn’t something easily solved by a challenge and a duel; the characters don’t have the status, or such a challenge would make the family explode entirely. How do people touched by Rage ease the transition of their own Lear figure?

- **Bad Romance:** One of the Kin’s in a truly destructive relationship, and loving it. They should be split up for their own good – trouble is, the other party is of excellent stock, and the darling of another bloodline. Can the players re-

solve the matter subtly before something happens, and both families start howling for each other’s blood?

- **Sudden Change:** One of the family abruptly undergoes the First Change. This shouldn’t have happened; the Garou had examined her at birth, proclaimed she wasn’t Garou, and that was that. What happened to change that? Was there a cover-up among the sept? Were the children covertly swapped? Is something *really* strange going on?

- **Getting Under the Skin:** A recent Rage-driven tragedy has half the family questioning the fairness of it all. And some Skin Dancers have gotten wind of it, and are using the opportunity to try some recruiting among some of the more isolated and vulnerable relatives. Can the characters find out what’s going on before loved ones start turning to the Skinner’s legacy? And what will they do if they’re too late, and now their cousins, or siblings, or parents, or children are Skin Dancers?

- **Death Spiral:** The Skin Dancers aren’t the only ones capable of seductive recruitment. It turns out that a family branch is actually of mixed blood – one part the expected tribe, but one part Black Spiral Dancer. Their relatives have found them, and are encouraging them to come home. Worse, what if the Spiral blood is even in the veins of one or more player characters?

- **Ancient Deeds:** A family member, maybe a player character, is having visions that they shouldn’t have. They’re

glimpses of old crimes committed by a distant forebear. But that forebear's accounted for; he's an ancestor-spirit in fine standing, watching over the family. Where's the truth in the matter? Are the memories a fabrication to frame the ancestor, is the spirit hiding something, or is the ancestor an impostor?

- **Information Wants to be Free:** The Garou prefer their Kin not be too visible, especially online. But with genealogical websites and keyword searches everywhere, it's hard to avoid some informational presence. Even those families with technological spirits sheltering them are at constant risk of someone recognizing the patterns that say "werewolves." When someone starts getting anonymous emails hinting at cracking the code, things are about to get complicated. What do they want? What resources do they really have? How can the security breach be closed, if this anonymous investigator isn't the only one?

- **Homesteading:** Thanks to shifting boundaries or a sudden windfall, the family has a chance to reclaim an old patch of land that used to be theirs. Buried somewhere on that land is a legacy that the bloodline once guarded: a powerful fetish, a bound spirit, maybe even a nascent caern. But the Kin themselves have forgotten their old charge. How will they discover their old legacy, and who else knows about it? Can they defend it until their Garou relatives arrive?

- **For Want of a Spirit:** The Baptism of Fire rite is performed on a newborn, but no Kin-Fetch answers the call. The well has apparently run dry. How will the players recruit new Kin-Fetches to look to their family's future? Did natural attrition reduce their numbers, or was it a more organized force?

Love and Romance

Let's address the obvious first: Not every gaming group is comfortable roleplaying romantic subplots. A chronicle involving Kinfolk is sure to touch on the topics of marriage and mating, though. If you or your players don't want to roleplay courtships and difficulties, you can keep that side of the equation pragmatically out-of-character.

But if you do, you probably already know that romantic subplots can be by turns difficult, frustrating, rewarding, and even a source of unexpected insights about a character. In a game strongly featuring Kinfolk, they're even more appropriate. When you love someone and want to build a future with them, the Garou's war to ensure there is a future is all the more poignant.

Too Much Information?

The biggest obstacle to a romantic subplot is usually the comfort levels of everyone involved. Players might be a little embarrassed talking about courtship and sweet-talk,

LOVE AND THE LITANY

Garou/Garou romances are verboten, and therefore very tempting. In fact, you probably don't need any advice on how to run stories of this nature. Players have a tendency to seek out these relationships on their own, and the obstacles are obvious. Plus, it's generally a dirty pool to tempt players to get their characters into trouble with such taboo romances.

Which isn't to say you *couldn't*. Lots of the advice in this section could apply if you felt like setting up possible Litany-breaking temptations. We won't tell.

much less acting out some of the words. If this is the case with your group, don't force it. The gains aren't clearly outstripping the cost.

If some of your players are interested and others would rather avoid actual romantic roleplay, then you have other options. In the earlier days of the hobby, some groups handled private roleplay through passing composition books back and forth, in a process that the game designer Aaron Allston dubbed "blue-booking." Nowadays in-character

IF IT NEEDS SAYING

Some players confuse sexuality and sexual content. Sexuality sounds racier than it actually is. Even G-rated Disney movies have sexuality whenever a prince and princess are interested in each other, or a child is raised by biological parents. A game without sexuality would be a game without, well, any references to Kinfolk.

While the more conservative Garou don't approve of sexual orientations other than hetero, again referencing that "anything that makes breeding more Garou less convenient is bad" mentality, we're of the belief that they're wrong. All sexual orientations belong in **Werewolf**, because they make characters more like living people. You can have a G-rated romance between two men, or a poly triad, or whatever; all the same rules of depiction apply. In a game where sapient shapeshifters can breed with non-sapient animals, that's tame stuff anyhow.

courtship can take place over emails and digital chat. As a bonus, many players find it easier to be articulate in writing. In addition, some of the players can meet outside of the regularly scheduled game sessions for smaller, downtime sessions dealing specifically with those characters' sub-plots.

Even if all the players enjoy roleplaying romance at the table, you'll probably want to set some boundaries. The actual knocking of boots doesn't need to be more than alluded to, unless you're part of a particularly bawdy troupe. It's enough to fade to black, at most saying "you two have an enjoyable evening" or "he's kind of excited, but eventually you settle him down."

It might be frustrating if some of your players are too embarrassed to deal with romantic subplots. It does seem strange that people are often more comfortable with graphically violent content than with abstract romance. But don't be too harsh on them. Romance is by definition an intimate behavior, and intimacy isn't something you want to force, even in the safe environment of a gaming table.

Deliberate Vs. Unplanned

Sitting down to plan a romantic subplot for a character is tricky, and can even be counterproductive. It often happens that you can craft a Storyteller character with the intent that this is going to be a player character's true love, and then the player doesn't really take an interest.

Romantic subplots that show up unbidden are easier to handle, even if they take a bit more improvisation. If they're unplanned, then they're fueled by genuine interest. In these cases, the best thing you can do to straight-up encourage them is to be obliging when a player locks on a character you hadn't thought of as a potential romantic interest. Sure, maybe you didn't expect anyone to be attracted to the badly-scarred veteran who tragically lost his pack; having him be a romantic interest makes him less of a loner. But in almost every case, it'll make him more interesting and well-rounded. The character in question doesn't have to immediately fall in love with the player character, mind. They might not even start out attracted to them. But if the player's interested in overcoming that challenge, you have some proactive play ready to happen.

Sometimes players want a romantic subplot even without an existing character in mind. In those cases, the obliging Storyteller puts a little more thought into introducing characters that fit the character's preferences. One important tactic is not to put all your eggs in one basket. Seed a variety of characters who might catch the player's eye. If she locks on one, great. If she finds two or three of them interesting and can't decide, even better!

Once you have a potential romantic interest and a player willing to pursue it, you have the skeleton of a romance. To flesh it out and make it more of a story, though, you need two things: chemistry and adversity.

Chemistry

Any interesting relationship has chemistry. We like to see sparks fly when two (or more) people interact. Unfortunately, solid chemistry can't be mandated. We have to believe in it for it to work, and as many Storytellers have learned, sometimes the character you think will capture your players' imaginations falls flat. It happens with antagonists, and it happens with romantic interests. While we can't provide you with sure-fire advice, here are some things that've worked for us:

- **Find Out What Characters (or Players) Like:** You don't have to outright surprise the players. You might ask them what kind of traits their characters might find attractive: intelligence, humor, broad shoulders, a stormy personality. Some Storytellers even ask players to send them pictures of people they find fascinating, from celebrity headshots to fantasy art. This becomes an agreed-upon signal that "she's got that Natalie Dormer smile" or "he's built like Dwayne Johnson" is shorthand for "This character catches your eye." But do try to get multiple examples or traits from your players. If a player tells you "anyone who looks like Oded Fehr, that's my only requirement," then that puts pressure on you to make the Silent Strider who looks like Oded Fehr the best option. And since chemistry can't be mandated, it's better to always have backups and alternate options.

- **Make Characters Interesting in Their Own Right:** Don't define characters primarily as possible romantic interests. Intriguing characters have goals and ambitions independent of the player characters' own. This makes them more realistic, and in a way "hard to get"; sometimes they're paying attention to things other than the player character. Player characters pitching in to help them realize their goal is also a very effective aid to romance. It establishes partnership, a great test to see if the chemistry's working.

- **Have Interesting Reasons They're Available:** Why isn't an attractive and competent character already spoken for? The good ones aren't always married or gay (or straight, for that matter). Rather, they should have reasons they aren't already in a relationship that provide interesting obstacles to overcome. Controlling parents? Just out of a bad breakup? Looking after a younger sibling? Haunted by an angry ancestor-spirit? It's a classic romance bit that the protagonist overcomes a barrier that lesser men or women couldn't, and wins their beloved's heart. Just make sure that the obstacle isn't *too* daunting. A man haunted by the memory of his first, true love is damn hard to win over, because the ghost of his love will always be perfect to him.

- **...Or Unacceptable Reasons They're Unavailable:** Alternately, the character could be in a relationship, and her partner is *terrible*. This is another classic romance bit, though a little trickier to pull off. If the potential partner comes across as a damsel (male or female) in need of rescue, the player might not respect them all that much. This setup

is particularly appropriate for **Werewolf** stories, as so often a Kin's family dictates that they marry for reasons other than love. The player might leap at the chance to overcome a rival and win another character's admiration in one go. Even better if the player enjoys stories about Honor...

Adversity

To quote Thomas Paine, *What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives every thing its value.* That's why adversity is the heart of stories, and romances are *absolutely* no exception. If lovers suffer no impediments to getting together and staying together, we become less invested. An added side benefit of adversity is that it also explains why a romantic interest isn't locked down in a loving relationship already. The player character who succeeds where others have failed will enjoy it all the more.

You can generally group these obstacles according to the familiar physical/social/mental split.

Physical adversity is the most straightforward, and sometimes the most contrived. The lovers are separated by physical obstacles. The long-distance relationship relies on a physical boundary; you can't just travel for thirty minutes to meet up with your intended. This might not be as challenging for Garou with access to moon bridges, of course. A more dramatic physical obstacle might be captivity: the lover has been shut up in the proverbial tower, surrounded by dangerous beasts, sheer walls, and other physical challenges.

Examples of physical adversity include long distance, captivity, some cases of spirit influence, recovering from wounds, interfering "kill-on-sight" characters such as Wyrmspawn, even physical transformations.

These stories suit players who like straightforward challenges and unambiguous interest. They also play well to **Werewolf's** mythic nature; it's appropriate to have a love story that plays out like a fairy tale or ancient myth. Physical adversity is most effective in the short-term: if a character can't have regular contact with the loved one, the sting of absence can fade over time.

Social adversity is the heart of countless love stories. The lovers aren't permitted to be together, thanks to feuding families, social class, controlling guardians, or any number of other possibilities. There might still be physical or mental obstacles to go with this, of course: the classic example is Romeo having to sneak onto the Capulet grounds and climb a balcony. But social adversity tends to be long-term. Even if you bypass the associated obstacles — with a stealthy elopement, for instance — if you haven't solved the root social obstacle, it'll rear its head again. If the caern warder didn't want you dating his son, he's going to give you constant grief if you disobeyed his will and stole his son away.

Examples of social adversity include controlling parents or guardians, feuding families, protecting the Veil, rival would-be

lovers, Renown issues, existing engagements or understandings, some cases of spirit interaction, or tribal rivalry.

These obstacles are ideal for players who enjoy character interaction, stories about gaining Renown, complicated relationship networks, making friends and influencing people. They're at their most effective playing out over the long term.

Mental adversity is one of the trickiest to handle. While physical and social adversity may separate two lovers who want to be together, mental adversity might induce a romantic interest to wonder if she *does* want to be with the character in question. A classic example might be the widower who still mourns his wife and isn't sure he's ready to move on. The obstacles can't be clawed apart or socially outmaneuvered. They generally require understanding and patience. Of course, some mental adversity may involve more investigative puzzles, such as when a love interest goes mysteriously missing.

Examples of mental adversity include love triangles, mourning for a lost love, amnesia, past traumas, mysterious occurrences, even subtle spirit possession.

Stories of this nature suit players with an interest in character psychology, intimate character interaction, ambiguous relationships, and the thrill of the chase. Investigative stories of course hit the players who enjoy problem-solving and mystery.

Naturally, most romantic relationships are threatened by a blend of two or three types. A long-distance relationship might include the social aspect of a possible love rival and the mental aspect of absence engendering doubt. If you're experimenting with possible obstacles to challenge a romance, use the physical/social/mental triad as inspiration rather than prescription. Once you have your primary obstacle as a springboard, keep yourself open to anything else that will make the romance seem more convincing.

Resolutions

Finally, adversity doesn't last forever. Most times either the character overcomes the obstacles between her and her intended, she loses interest in the romance, or she or her intended are taken out of the equation entirely. Leave the "will-they-or-won't-they" perpetual lack of motion for the tired, lazy dramas on their ninth season.

When the lovers are united, that's the end of the courtship story, but it's not an end to all stories. More adversity could pop up, of course — a stereotypical example being that the two can't have children, so there's pressure to split up and find a mate who can help engender the next generation. Loved ones tend to get threatened in about every genre.

But just because the chase is over doesn't mean the relationship is boring. A romantic partner is no less interesting than any other supporting cast member with a personality. When done right, you're rewarding players with extra social roleplaying instead of experience points — and isn't that a worthy goal?

Generational Chronicles

If you and your players are up for a particularly challenging form of game, the generational chronicle can take you places you wouldn't ordinarily go. There's no way to explore the theme of legacy quite like actually playing as the generation who inherits the consequences of your last characters' actions.

At its simplest, a generational chronicle involves playing through a "chapter" with one group of characters, then advancing the timeline for a new chapter starring new characters, the heirs of the previous group. The players might play Garou every generation, or Kinfolk, or a mix of the two. A generational chronicle might last as little as two generations, or many more, depending on the chapter length and the way the stories play out.

This style of play can be a lot of fun, but it'll bring some new challenges as well. It might be trickier to adapt to a new batch of characters on a regular basis. But there's nothing quite like the thrill of seeing story elements have repercussions that resurface later on. You'll get to ask and answer the question "What happened next?" in a whole new way.

Here are some of the questions you'll likely want to ask as you plan your chronicle:

- **What's the Starting Point?** When does the first generational story take place? The American Civil War? The arrival of European colonists in the Americas? The Middle Ages? Even earlier?

- **What's the Ending Point?** Most often you'll answer this with the present day, or the End Times. But a chronicle might end earlier, particularly if it seems like a tragic doom is about to take place. A chronicle that started with the fall of the Roman Empire could end with the last children of a Garou bloodline vanishing with the Croatan.

- **Play Every Generation, or Skip a Few?** The answer relies on the previous two. Obviously, if you plan to start in the Roman Empire and end with the End Times, it'd be far too demanding to play through every generation. On the other hand, if you're starting with World War I and planning to run up to modern times, it might seem abrupt to skip a generation or two.

- **One Bloodline, or Many?** Do the players prefer multi-tribal play, or are they interested in following the fortunes of a single family? You might find that single-bloodline chronicles work better when they're shorter, being less diverse but more intimately connected.

- **Kinfolk, Shapeshifters, or a Mix?** You might be answering this question differently for each generation. It keeps things fresh when a player moves from playing a shapeshifter to a Kinfolk and back, as long as you're comfortable challenging a mixed group, or moving from a story starring Garou to a story starring ordinary Kin. With luck, your players will be inspired by the events of each chapter, and their ideas for their characters' heirs will make your job easier.

Odds are, every generation is going to be more Kin than Garou, particularly if you're playing the descendants of



the previous. If you're comfortable with mixed Kin/Garou groups, you might want to have each player roll a die to see if their next character "breeds true." The difficulty for the roll is 10, reduced by 1 for any amount of Pure Breed, and reduced by 1 again if the player acquitted herself memorably with her last character. Success indicates the player can play a Garou if she so chooses; otherwise, her next character is Kin (and no, there is no botching this roll and having to sit out a story).

If you prefer to avoid mixes, then consider having every second or third generational group be Garou. This adds an interesting bit of pacing to the chronicle, as the stakes jump higher whenever a werewolf pack's in play.

Challenges

Earlier, we did say a generational chronicle is challenging. If you're considering running one, here are some of the considerations you might want to bear in mind.

- **Logistics of Length:** A satisfying generational chronicle needs to have at least one complete story for each generation played. It can be tricky to pick the right length of spotlight time for each group of characters before moving on. On the terse side of the spectrum, the chronicle might spend only a single session on each generation, effectively chaining together one-shots. On the generous side, it might be multiple stories building up a chapter before a generation reaches a dramatically satisfying stopping point and the torch is passed. If you've run an extended chronicle before, you probably know some of the considerations already. For example, your players' attention spans: do they want to thoroughly explore each character, or do they want to hit some dramatic high notes and then try something different? Or player availability; if someone's often away traveling, would quick generation turnover work well for them? Estimate the chronicle length that you know your players can commit to – and then maybe shorten that estimate, just to allow for unforeseen hang-ups.

- **Historical Detail:** Nobody expects a chronicle to be as meticulously researched as a grad thesis, but a generational chronicle does need to touch on the current events or milestones of each time period. A chapter set after a World War should feature families who've suffered crippling loss. A chapter set in the Cold War showcases paranoia. The better you can sell the zeitgeist of a historical setting, the richer your chronicle will be.

- **The Apocalypse:** Experienced Werewolf players know that the End Times hit in our own modern time. Even though their characters don't know that, players might not viscerally feel apocalyptic dread during a game set a hundred years in the past. Don't worry about focusing on the Apocalypse as a theme for the historical chapters. Instead, show the players how their actions will shape the next generation. Their decisions might land their next group of characters in a worse position, with squandered family resources and

their parents' enemies howling for their blood. The players know the chronicle won't end if their characters get killed early – but they also know that the consequences of their actions will live on beyond their current characters' time.

- **Player Turnover:** Fact of life: players sometimes have to leave a game, and new ones might ask to join. This is actually not a challenge in and of itself. The shift between generations is a perfect time to change up the troupe, and even if some players have to leave or join partway through one generation's story, it's no more difficult to deal with than it would be in a traditional chronicle. The main issue to watch out for is investment. You want new players to care about what's gone before, so be sure to find ways to make the previous generation's actions relevant to their own characters' goals and situations.

If you're using mechanical legacies (see below), be sure to offer them to every character in a generation that gets them, new player or not. The legacies aren't a reward for long-term participation, they're a mechanic to show that the players' actions matter. It reinforces that concept when a legacy affects an entire generation, not just certain characters.

Predestination

It's pretty obvious that if you're playing a generational chronicle, the world's not going to end before you get to the last generation. Well, it *could*, but that's generally not what's at stake. But that doesn't mean everything's mapped out from the beginning. Nor should it be. The players may know there's going to be another generation after their current one, but that doesn't mean their characters have to survive to sire or bear children, much less rear them. The next generation might be the offspring of cousins, adopted apprentices, just about anything.

You might have an idea about the plots for each generation ahead of time. Take our advice; don't set anything in stone ahead of time. If you plan to begin the second generation with having an old, scarred previous character handing off the family *klaive*, then you'll have to throw that plan out if the character dies heroically in a Black Spiral Hive, and his *klaive* is lost with him. (And by all means resist the temptation to prevent that death – the players' actions should dictate the chronicle's path, not your script.) Plus, now a character might have a "retrieve your father's *klaive* from the Black Spiral Dancers" story, and the player has an instant personal connection to that plot.

Think a little about what the players are supposed to achieve in each story or generation. Then consider what might happen if they fail, or if they succeed more gloriously than you'd expected. The starting point of the next story should reflect the close of the last, even if it takes place generations or even centuries later.

If you're doing it right, the final story of the chronicle might not be anything like what you had in mind when you

pitched the chronicle in the first place. Or it might. But with the freedom to follow the players' actions, it'll be all the more satisfying for feeling organic and earned.

Legacies

Each generation leaves a mark on the next. In a **Werewolf** chronicle, you can reinforce this further by bringing in supernatural legacies, or even mechanical ones. Essentially, this is an opportunity to reflect continuity and consequences by having later generations start with benefits or burdens (or both) inherited from their forebears.

The simplest legacy is knowledge. If one pack survives to pass down their knowledge, the next starts play with access to some of their enemies' secrets. Not only does this cut down on exposition time, it helps unify the chronicle's tale.

Spirits and other immortal Storyteller characters are another excellent resource. The players might win the loyalty of a spirit that promises to protect and advise their children. Or they might slaughter a vampire, causing the vampire's mate to swear vengeance against their bloodline. An ageless ally or enemy also ensures the feeling that these stories are tied together — possibly with overt commentary, even.

Most important, and perhaps trickiest, is a social legacy that affects the inheriting generation. This goes beyond the basics of "the sept knows your ancestors were great heroes" and into specifics. If a predecessor pack won the favor of a river-spirit, then the caern itself might have such strong water-spirit affinity years later that a new pack of Uktena and their Kin have become part of the sept. The allure of a roleplaying game is the ability to make decisions that matter, and to see your actions reflected in the world in an organic way. Setting up a social legacy, letting the players see just how they've changed the world (and where they haven't) and having that be the starting point for a new story — that's mainlining the drug of player agency.

Backing It Up with Rules

The existing character creation rules provide some great opportunities to provide clear legacies for your players. Consider granting a successor generation bonus experience points, free Background dots, free Merits (or free Flaws), or a combination of any of those. The specifics of the legacy depend on how the story of the last game ended. For instance, if the family captured a silver mine from a fomori gang of outlaws back in the 1800s, maybe the next generation gets an extra dot or two of Resources to reflect their gains.

A sample structure might involve giving a successor generation up to ten free experience points, and up to five points of Background or Merits depending on how their previous generation ended the last story. If the last generation won a solid victory, the successors get ten experience points and an appropriate Merit; if it was a Pyrrhic victory, they

get ten experience points, a Merit and a Flaw; if a crushing defeat, ten experience points and a Flaw.

Note that the legacy doesn't automatically range from "strong advantage" to "you get nothing." Even if a generation failed in their story, that's going to give their inheritors plenty of problems already. You don't have to compound it with a parsimonious or purely negative inheritance.

Most Backgrounds make good legacy rewards, specifically Allies, Ancestors, Contacts, Fate, Fetish, Kinfolk, Mentor, Resources, Rites, and Totem. Even Pure Breed and Spirit Heritage might work, though these are usually not awarded to an entire group, for obvious reasons.

Good Merits for mechanical legacies include Favor, Camp Goodwill, Notable Heritage, Supernatural Companion, and Ancestor Ally. Particularly appropriate Flaws include Dark Secret, Enemy, Camp Enmity, Hunted, Cursed, Insane Ancestor, and possibly Dark Fate. (Contemplate a chronicle where everyone gets Dark Fate in every generation. Some bloodlines have a hell of a cross to bear...)

Example of Play

Aaron is planning a generational **Werewolf** chronicle that will cover 150 years of history. He plans to start in the Wild West era, situating the action around a caern in the Sangre de Christo range. He knows he wants to handle a number of time periods: Wild West, Prohibition or Great Depression, the 1960s, the early '90s, and the present day. He decides to limit himself to only a story or so for each generation, unless the players revolt and demand to play another story with a particularly beloved batch of characters. His intention is to start with a werewolf pack in the Wild West period, then have two Kinfolk stories before switching the focus back to Garou in the more modern times.

He creates the Voice of the Snow Caern, and sets up a situation where the local werewolf population has been ravaged by the war with an ancient Bane and its brood. The native Uktena and Wendigo are too few to guard the caern safely, but the newcomer Garou are also too weak to take and hold it themselves. The first story will focus on finding a way for the two sides to unite and finally rebind the Bane: essentially an "origin story" for the caern. He figures later generations' stories will be a mix of legacy plots that spin out of each group of characters' actions, building toward a climax where the Wyrms' forces try to reawaken the Bane in the modern era.

Four of his friends agree to play in the chronicle, although not all can promise to be there for every generation. Laurie wants to play an Uktena, and focuses on the mystic secrets passed down through the years. Shep wants to play a Get of Fenris for the first story, but will see where it goes. Martin goes for a Wendigo, and is toying with the idea of his bloodline falling to the Wyrms at some point. And Liz picks a Black Fury, really drawn to the idea of building a family legacy of great Renown.

Aaron plots out the first story, setting things up so that the Bane, a monstrously powerful thing called the Child-Gnawer, is mortally wounded but still on the loose. The player characters' various allies and mentors have already given their lives to hurt it so badly. It'll be up to the characters to strike a peace, recover the ritual to bind the Child-Gnawer, and put it back under the earth.

Aaron then considers possible end-points for the first story. The players could fail entirely, which would mean the next group of characters might have to recover the caern from the Wym's forces and complete the ritual. They might have a mixed success, in which the Child-Gnawer is bound again, but at great cost. And they might exceed his expectations, finding a clever way to bind the Bane and survive largely intact.

He decides that an utter failure will mean a mechanical legacy of 15 bonus experience points and a nasty no-points bonus Flaw for the new characters in the Prohibition or Depression era. They'll need to be tough, but they'll also bear the mark of their predecessor's failure. A mixed success will mean 12 experience points but no Flaw. A dramatic success will mean 12 experience points and a potent free Merit or two. Although Aaron has a few ideas for what Merits and Flaws might be appropriate, he decides (wisely) not to choose them ahead of time. However the players resolve the situation will indicate what advantages or disadvantages their next characters will inherit.

At the close of the story, the players have earned a mixed success; Shep's Get of Fenris has died gloriously, and the Child-Gnawer is bound, but it had time to pronounce a curse on the survivors. Aaron revises his initial plans. In addition to the mechanical legacy of 12 experience points he adds a Flaw: Cursed, but he offsets this by adding the Merit: Ancestor Ally to the mix (since a mixed success would normally levy no Flaw at all). The next batch of characters have inherited their parents' and forebears' curse, but Shep's Get is lingering around as a brutally helpful ancestor-spirit. Aaron informs the players that the next generation will focus on Kinfolk descendants in the Great Depression, and the troubles they bear with the curse in play.

Also, there's a shift in the troupe. Liz has had to drop out of the next story for real life reasons, but Amado and Karen heard about the game and think it sounds pretty great. Amado generates a Wendigo Kin, only distantly related to Martin's new character. Karen asks to play an inheritor of Liz's legacy, and gets her blessing to play a Fury Kin from the bloodline. Aaron gives both Amado and Liz the option of taking the mechanical legacy or not. Both accept; Amado's character's new to the region, but he likes the thought of the Child-Gnawer's curse falling on her through no fault of her own.

Aaron then outlines the next story based on the proposed characters, again anticipating the players' possible degrees of success, and on the chronicle rolls.

Kin Fetches

The Garou are a scattered few watchmen along a very long wall. They simply can't be everywhere they need to be. And that means that most First Changes happen without a fellow werewolf anywhere around. Although a werewolf is a werewolf from birth, to Scent of the True Form and other spirit magics they appear to be Kinfolk until the hour of their Change. And since the First Change can happen anywhere from early adolescence to late in life, Garou can't even plan to be there when a Kinfolk hits "the right age." Out of necessity, the duty of watching Kinfolk and notifying their Garou relatives in case of a change was delegated to spirit allies.

Kin-Fetches are a rare Gaian example of a "cultivated" spirit, one that has changed to serve a specific purpose rather than reflecting a natural creature, force, or abstraction. They started out as Gafflings tied to the tribal totems' broods, and were changed by magic such as the Gift: Malleable Spirit (**W20 Corebook**, p. 166). These days, a tribe's allied brood of Kin-Fetches ranges from old servants who've been around for generations, even centuries, to recently modified spirits still learning their new purpose.

Everykenning extended family relies on many Kin-Fetches. Optimally, they should have access to one for every child (or wolf cub) born into the bloodline. Practically, that's not always the case. Not only are there generational fertility booms, but Kin-Fetches can be lost in the cause of duty – or worse – subverted.

Like most spirits, a Kin-Fetch starts out small, weak, and with barely more sapience than a bundle of instincts. All that's required of them is to return and alert the family if their charge undergoes the Change. Since full Garou are a minority in any generation, most Kin-Fetches never do anything but watch over their charges.

The way for a Kin-Fetch to get stronger is to perform its function. The spirit that returns with news of a newly-Changed Garou is free to be bound again, just a touch swifter and more perceptive for its success. Many tribes, the Uktena in particular, make a point of offering chiminage to returning Kin-Fetches to honor their service. This strengthens the spirit even further. Wise (and lucky) Garou families can nurture more powerful and individual servants over the generations, becoming almost like ancestral familiars. Silver Fangs take pride in their family Kin-Fetches, much as any aristocrat might value a servant who has distinguished himself.

Although Kin-Fetches are highly valuable, they're an oddity in the spirit world: spirits with the explicit purpose of serving the Garou. They have no identity outside their function of watching over the next generation of werewolves. This makes them less than popular with spirits outside their

tribal totem's brood. Not all Kin-Fetches who go missing are lost to the forces of the Wyrm.

The Process

The first Kin-Fetches were shaped from other spirits in the tribal totem's brood, then bound to their infant charges using the Rite of Binding. Over time, as more Kin-Fetches became available, the Garou developed the Baptism of Fire rite. (See p. 210 in the **W20 Corebook**)

A powerful Theurge can create a Kin-Fetch from another spirit of her tribal totem's brood, using the Gift: Malleable Spirit at difficulty 9. This works best if the spirit has been encouraged to "volunteer" for the process with ample chiminage (reducing the difficulty to 8). Some elder Crescent Moons consider it their duty to create more Kin-Fetches every year, just in case.

In a pinch, a werewolf can use the Rite of Summoning and Rite of Binding to attach a Kin-Fetch to a child. But the Baptism of Fire rite serves the function better. This rite has many small variants according to the tribe, in some cases even the camp or bloodline. Some tribes make a point to teach the Baptism of Fire to any Kinfolk who have proven themselves capable of using rites. Children born to Kin/Kin pairings don't always appear on their Garou relatives' radar, so it's practical to make sure that the Kinfolk can pick up the slack.

Variant Rites

The Baptism of Fire takes many forms—at least thirteen, one major variant for each tribe. Here are some suggested variants, with possible minor mechanical adjustments. If you don't like the thought of rites undergoing mechanical drift, just use the standard rite.

- The Black Furies often use a portion of the umbilical cord as part of the rite, to further reinforce the tie. This gives the ritemaster two additional dice to the rite's dice pool.

- The Bone Gnawers tend to have sprawling, chaotic families. One version of their rite involves heaps of chiminage for the Kin-Fetch, but includes the extra command of "and if any of your charge's siblings Change, you let us know."

- The Children of Gaia try to bind Kin-Fetches with some affinity for healing or good health to their children. Such a Kin-Fetch has one fewer point of Rage, but one extra point of Gnosis.

- A Fianna Baptism of Fire is a noisy event, full of howls and song. If the tribe has the freedom to cause a ruckus without drawing enemy attention, they draw a Kin-Fetch with a Gnosis score one higher than usual.

- It's common Get of Fenris practice to draw the blood of the infant during the rite. If the child doesn't cry, it's an excellent sign. The ritemaster can roll Dexterity + Medicine, difficulty 8, to draw the blood painlessly. If the child doesn't cry, the summoned Kin-Fetch gains +1 to its Rage and Willpower scores.

- The Glass Walkers developed variants of the rite that can be blended with other religious ceremonies, thus allowing callow Kin to be present for a more traditional "baptism" or the like. The ritemaster performing these rites must have at least one dot of Subterfuge. The difficulty to detect the Kin-Fetch or the child's brand is raised by one for anyone other than a Glass Walker or one of Cockroach's brood.

- The Shadow Lords douse all their fires and lights at the height of the ritual; the moment when the Kin-Fetch kisses the child is performed in utter darkness. All rolls to detect the child's brand are at +2 difficulty for anyone other than a Shadow Lord or one of Grandfather Thunder's Brood.

- Silent Striders are the exact opposite of the Fianna, performing the Baptism of Fire in level whispers. The Kin-Fetch is encouraged to help hide the child in times of trouble. The difficulty to detect the Kin-Fetch or the child's brand is raised by one for anyone other than a Strider or one of Owl's brood.

- The Silver Fangs' version takes a good long time, as they recite the child's extensive pedigree. The Kin-Fetch gains +1 to its Willpower score as it understands the gravity of its charge.

- The Stargazers must perform their rite under the open sky, optimally cloudless; they've been known to delay the rite for moon after moon until the stars can be seen. For the next year, the ritemaster gains an additional die to any dice pools for Gifts or rites used to divine the future, location or well-being of the child.

- The Uktena call their Kin-Fetches out of natural running water when they can. Their Kin-Fetches receive +1 die to any actions taken within earshot of a natural stream or river.

- The Wendigo draw tenacious Kin-Fetches by leaving the infant exposed to the weather for a short time. If properly appeased, their Kin-Fetches receive +1 to their Rage scores.

Lost Rites

Some Galliards keep tales of when it was better. According to their legends, the tribes held more powerful rites that could do even more. One ancestral ballad depicts a rite that summoned a host of Kin-Fetches, sending them to watch over an entire bloodline at once. Another tells of more powerful Kin-Fetches, shaped from mighty spirits by heroic Theurges. They would not merely watch a cub, but watch over it — manifesting as a terrible beast when the child was threatened — and then vanishing once they dispatched the threat. Some Theurges have even mused that it was possible to bind Kin-Fetches to an entire tribal lineage, back in the days before the Garou spread across the continents.

The rites themselves are long lost, unfortunately, and the shamans of the End Times have much more pressing affairs on their minds than recreating them. Still, odd things happen. Strange Kin-Fetches nobody can remember binding

sometimes appear, leading Garou to newly-Changed cubs from unfamiliar families. An urban legend of a little girl's very real, unnervingly violent, imaginary friend unfolds with evidence of a powerful but unseen spirit watching over the child. Such rites would be a valuable edge if they could be recovered — or if they fell into the Black Spiral Dancer's talons, a dangerous inspiration for their fevered imaginations.

The Trigger

Once a Kin-Fetch is attached to its charge, it stays near at all times, using a Charm to stay invisible. Other spirits and shapeshifters can't tell if a person has an attached Kin-Fetch by spying in the Umbra. The only giveaway is the fetch brand. The spirit Peeks into the material world sometimes, and sometimes keeps its senses in the Umbra.

When a cub marked by a Kin-Fetch undergoes the First Change, the spirit knows instantaneously. The brand dissolves, and the energy released alerts the Kin-Fetch. It immediately sets out in search of the Garou who bound it to the child, or failing that, any other Garou of the relevant tribe nearby. Some Kin-Fetches are swift, others unerring trackers.

Of course, sometimes the Garou who bound them are dead and gone. A sept might have been wiped out years ago, and the Kin-Fetch can find only bones. What happens next varies, especially depending on the spirit. A weak and near-unintelligent Kin-Fetch might wait at the caern for years, hoping for a Garou to appear. More powerful Jagglings might go on a long journey to find proper relatives. Some tell the first Garou they see — regardless of tribe.

Breaking the Bond

The Garou can't afford to let a Kin-Fetch stay forever with a bonded Kinfolk, when there are other cubs to watch. If a Kin reaches an age where it seems clear the First Change won't happen — and this age is entirely subjective — her werewolf relatives are likely to use a variant of the Rite of Spirit Awakening to erase her fetch brand and free the Kin-Fetch. This has to be done more subtly on any callow Kin who received the Baptism of Fire, usually while they're drugged.

Fera and Kin-Fetches

The Kin-Fetch practice serves some Fera as well. The less social Changing Breeds, such as most Bastet, are disorganized enough that the process is even more vital. The more nomadic the Changing Breed, and the less likely to keep sept-like structures, the more they may rely on their own versions of the Baptism of Fire. The Corax, for instance, may bind a Kin-Fetch shortly after the Rite of the Fetish Egg that they use to pass on their half-spirit nature.

Some, like the Kitsune, are as formal about the process as any Silver Fang. Others don't bother. The Ratkin trust their information networks, and frankly they have so many

LINGERING KIN-FETCH (2 PT. KINFOLK MERIT)

You never Changed, but for some reason your werewolf relatives never freed the Kin-Fetch bound to you. The spirit is unusually alert and responsive for its kind, and occasionally whispers warnings of things it perceives. Once per story, it alerts you to danger (assuming that there is danger in the story), as if you had successfully rolled on the Danger Sense Merit (*Werewolf*, pg. 483). You might or might not know the source of the warning; even callow Kin can take this Merit.

One drawback of this Merit is that you still have your fetch brand. Any Garou who sees it — including Black Spiral Dancers — instantly knows you for Kin.

MALINGERING KIN-FETCH (3 PT. KINFOLK FLAW)

The Kin-Fetch bound to you was never freed, and its attentions have started to become unpleasantly obsessive. It whispers for you to Change in times of stress, giving you a -2 penalty to Perception rolls in difficult situations. This can be particularly unpleasant and frightening for callow Kin.

To further complicate things, you still have your fetch brand. Any Garou can recognize you as Kin if they see the glyph.

offspring most nests wouldn't have the Kin-Fetches to spare. The Nuwisha prefer odd divinations to determine the time of "strange accidents." But then again, the werecoyotes never did like doing things the same as everyone else.

Spirits of the Blood

Like other spirits, all Kin-Fetches have Airt Sense, Materialize, Realm Sense, and Re-form, although only the strongest ones will even consider Materializing. Most also have the following Charms.

- **Fetch Brand:** The spirit can mark a mortal with a small brand, visible only to Garou, in the shape of the glyph of its brood's allied tribe. The spirit can place the brand just about anywhere on the body, including even the inside of the lip or the scalp. Most werewolves instruct the Kin-Fetch to make the brands hard to find (the Black

Spiral Dancers in particular); some, too proud for their own good, want an easily evident sign of glory (such as many Silver Fangs). If the marked mortal undergoes the Change, the brand is burned away and the Kin-Fetch is immediately aware of the Change, whether or not it's viewing the material world at the time.

• **Subtle Watcher:** The Kin-Fetch can make itself invisible at no cost, and maintain the invisibility for as long as it chooses, as long as it remains within roughly three meters of its fetch-branded target. Other spirits will not be able to detect it unless they have specific counter-charms.

Kin-Fetch

The most basic Kin-Fetch is a Gaffling, small and weak. This represents a Kin-Fetch that hasn't successfully alerted its tribe to a newly Changed cub more than once, or a freshly adapted spirit. They are quiet, modest spirits, fully dedicated to their job once they've placed the fetch brand on a charge.

Rage 3, Gnosis 4, Willpower 5, Essence 12-20

Charms: Fetch Brand, Peek, Subtle Watcher; one of Swift Flight or Tracking

Image: The typical Kin-Fetch resembles a member of its totem's brood, or perhaps a small version of its totem's avatar: shaggy wolf-spirits with steely teeth, barn owls and screech owls, small horned snakes, rats of every color. Some are smaller and more innocuous, and others are larger and more majestic. Since the purpose of a Kin-Fetch is to serve a tribe, they all bear a silvery glyph of their allied tribe on their form.

Background: Kin-Fetches remember little of their previous existence as animal-spirits or more abstract Gafflings. They shift from a mental focus on the good of a tribe to the mental focus on a single child or cub, and then back again once their mission is complete. They are poor conversationalists at best.

Blood Fetch

Some Kin families are so old and prosperous that their Kin-Fetches have altered further to match them. Blood Fetches are invariably attached to bloodlines with high Pure Breed, as they're strengthened and shaped by the higher birthrate of Garou. They have risen to Jagging rank, and act something like household deities for their families.

Rage 7, Gnosis 8, Willpower 8, Essence 23-35

Charms: Fetch Brand, Peek, Subtle Watcher, Swift Flight, Tracking; one other of the Storyteller's choice

Image: Blood Fetches are like their weaker brethren, but clearly larger and more resplendent. Most Blood Fetches are of the "resembles the tribal totem" variety, though it doesn't seem clear that they started out that way. Perhaps centuries of faithful service just makes one of Owl's Kin-Fetches more like Owl. Certainly some Blood Fetches have a dis-

KIN-FETCHES BY BROOD

Every tribe has Kin-Fetches that resemble smaller versions of their tribal totem's avatar. Here are some ideas for Kin-Fetches that resemble other spirits in a tribal totem's brood.

Chimera: Living mandalas, glass moths, mirage serpents, patchwork animals, incarnated names

Cockroach: Coin spiders, digital insects, glass mice, data clouds, tiny mechanical drones

Falcon: Herons, pelicans, cranes, merlins, egrets, swifts

Fenris: Ravens, cuckoos, squirrels (children of Ratatoskr), weapons and shields

Grandfather Thunder: Crows, bats, shadows, whispering voices, St. Elmo's Fire

Griffin: Badgers, wolverines, lion cubs, carion birds

Owl: Skeletal mice, nightjars, scarabs, cobras, jackals, scorpions, tiny crocodiles

Pegasus: Winged animals, gazelles, goats, drakainae, weaver-women

Rat: Stray dogs, raccoons, mice, newspaper animals, alley cats, opossums

Stag: Hares, luna moths, white deer, foxes, boars, salmon

Uktena: Feathered serpents, hummingbirds, quetzals, roadrunners, sea snakes

Unicorn: Doves, swans, ducks, otters, mutts

Wendigo: Wolverines, geese, jackrabbits, porcupines, living auroras

tinct appearance all their own: an owl-headed sphinx, an articulate *mengu* (samurai's mask), a stag with six antlers. A few aristocratic Kin families even have heraldic devices that resemble their Blood Fetch.

Background: Kinfolk families who've had Pure Breed for many generations may have a Blood Fetch attached to their clan – sometimes more than one, especially in the case of Silver Fang houses – though usually only one per household. The Blood Fetch has an individual name, invoked during the Baptism of Fire. It is invariably bound to the most promising-seeming child.

Blight Nurse

Kin-Fetches can be tainted like any other spirit, and Kinfolk can be just as brutal and psychopathic as any other mortal. A Kin-Fetch corrupted by the twisted deeds of its charge may become a Blight Nurse, compelled to find other children and help them grow up “properly.” They whisper horrible suggestions from the Umbra, and sometimes even go so far to possess their charges, turning them into fomori. To make it even worse, Blight Nurses have a real knack for sniffing out Kinfolk, and prefer them to any other children.

Age 4, Gnosis 5, Willpower 4, Essence 13-20

Charms: Corruption, Fetch Brand, Peek, Possession, Subtle Watcher, Tracking

Image: Blight Nurses look something like their original forms, with a strong tendency to become emaciated or obese. The tribal glyphs on their form have shifted, with many of the pictographic strokes ending in warped Wyrnish spirals. They speak in wheedling whispers, although they address only their charges. “Tell that nasty wolf you don’t want to go with him,” they say. “Make me proud.”

Background: Sometimes Kin-Fetches go bad. It happens most often when the children they’re bound to aren’t quite right. The child goes to darker and darker places, especially as they grow into adulthood, and the Kin-Fetch has nowhere to go. It can’t abandon its precious charge. With enough accumulated taint, the spirit becomes a Blight Nurse.

The Blight Nurse’s purpose veers away from “tell the Garou,” and into “make sure the child comes up right.” Once it’s released – usually by the death of its charge, since most aren’t bound to actual shapeshifters – it finds another child to latch on to, preferably another Kin. They’ve been known to kill and devour Kin-Fetches and take their place. Some Black Spiral Dancers even bind Blight Nurses with their own version of the Baptism of Fire. They find it dreadfully amusing. If all goes well, a child grows up with an affinity for the Wyrm even before their First Change.

Fetch Spider

The Weaver poses a constant threat to Kin-Fetches operating in big cities and other such places. Weaver-spirits try to assimilate Kin-Fetches much as they would any other spirit. The Glass Walkers found one way around that threat by binding spirits that could pass for the Weaver’s servants.

Age 1, Gnosis 5, Willpower 4, Essence 10-20

Charms: Fetch Brand, Peek, Subtle Watcher, Weaver Camouflage*

***Weaver Camouflage:** Weaver-spirits ignore the spirit with this Charm, assuming it to be one of their own. If the spirit attempts to infiltrate any area of strong Weaver activity, the spirits on guard might notice something is amiss. If an observer’s suspicion is raised enough to look for some



deception, the difficulty to see through this Charm's power is equal to 10 – the Charm user's Rage.

Image: Fetch Spiders look largely like Pattern Spiders; in much the same way a robber fly resembles a bee or a viceroy butterfly takes after a monarch. Close examination reveals a more organic rounding to their joints, and the Glass Walker glyph is subtly marked on the underside of their abdomens.

Background: Nobody's sure whether the Glass Walker Theurges modified Weaver-spirits to change their very allegiance, or infused Gaian spirits with Weaver essence for a powerful camouflage. Either method would be considerably more challenging than creating a Kin-Fetch from one of a tribal totem's brood. Still, the Fetch Spiders are a notable success, fooling even Banes. The only drawback is that they're fragile. The higher the spirit's Rage, the harder it is to pass as a Weaver-spirit – its vital energy feels too different. Fetch Spiders aren't the best at defending themselves, but with luck it doesn't come down to that.

Fetch-Hawk

These wasp-like spirits were carefully groomed by Theurges of the Black Spiral. Their purpose is to hunt Kin-Fetches, parasitize them, and then misdirect them to bring news of a First Change to the Dancers instead.

Rage 3, Gnosis 4, Willpower 6, Essence 13-18

Charms: Corruption, Parasitic Possession*, Tracking

***Parasitic Possession:** As the Possession Charm, save that the Fetch-Hawk can sink its essence into that of another spirit. The Fetch-Hawk gains three extra dice to the Gnosis roll to possess Kin-Fetches.

Image: Fetch-Hawks are named after tarantula hawk wasps, not avians. They look something like wasps the size of a man's thumb, with long syringe-like abdomens and extra sets of bale-green compound eyes. Their speech is a wheezy whisper formed by the beating of their wings.

Background: The Black Spiral Dancers don't have that many pure Kin-Fetches left. The original White Howler familiars died out long ago, and the Dancers often cope by keeping their children in captivity rather than recruiting spirits to let them grow up a little more free-range. But the Dancers always love recruiting, and so their Theurges modified these spirits to serve an insidious purpose.

A Fetch-Hawk uses Tracking to scent out Kin-Fetches, then attempts to possess them. The insectoid Bane lies dormant in its host spirit, waiting. When a parasitized Kin-Fetch watches its charge undergo the First Change, the Fetch-Hawk then takes control and flees back to the nearest Hive to inform the Black Spiral Dancers that a new target awaits recruitment. As an added bonus, the Gaians may take a while to notice one of their children is missing...

CRUSADE FOR THE CHILDREN

Fetch-Hawks are just one example of one of the more insidious arms races between Gaia's own and the Wyrms' chosen. The Black Spiral Dancers work to develop new rites and seek out possible Gifts that would allow them to detect and subvert Gaian Kin-Fetches. If they had their way, they'd rig the spiritual game so that the children of the Thirteen Tribes would deliver themselves right to the nearest Hive.

Gaian Theurges don't sit idle, either. They puzzle out the details of countermeasures to protect their nursemaid spirits: rites that can baffle Spiral divinations, fetishes that can detect Fetch-Hawks, and so on. The Charm: Subtle Watcher is an old example. Back before the White Howlers fell, there wasn't as much need for Kin-Fetches to hide themselves. They remained visible near their charges, and most spirits would avoid them the moment they saw the tribal brand. When the Black Spiral Dancers started actively targeting Kin-Fetches, the Thirteen Tribes figured out a way to modify the spirits. Whenever a sept manages to raid a Spiral Hive, at least one of the Theurges carefully hunts for evidence of any new advances in the race.

Kin-Fetch Story Hooks:

- **Interception:** A character receives a call from her Kin that one of the family just Changed. But the Kin-Fetch never arrived at the sept. Odds are the spirit was intercepted by the enemy, making it a race against time to get the cub calm and somewhere safe. To further complicate things, what if the Kin-Fetch is older and stronger, like a Blood Fetch? Will the pack risk themselves to rescue it, or is it likely to show up later, twisted and betrayed?

- **Nest-Robbing:** The characters have intercepted not just any Bane, but a Black Spiral Dancer Kin-Fetch trying to report in. They have a chance to rescue a new Garou from a horrible life of corruption, but the cub is almost sure to have all manner of problems in his blood. Can they save a soul full of blackened Rage? And what if the cub's Dancer relatives are genuinely attached to him?

- **Chrysalis:** A veteran Kin-Fetch has been showing signs of increased intelligence and perception, engaging in

conversations about things other than the here and now of its charge. It's on the verge of metamorphosing into a Blood Fetch, which would be amazingly valuable, and the cub it watches has been showing signs of growing Rage. But it's starting to get distracted in its newfound awareness, and people are noticing strange things happening around the cub. Can the pack watch over the cub until the Change? Can they protect the spirit until it changes itself? And what threats will be drawn by the Kin-Fetch's behavior to complicate both goals?

- **Subtlety Required:** The tribe needs more free Kin-Fetches to deal with recent births. The pack is charged with removing the Kin-Fetches from the older members of a family of callow Kin. But they have to do it without causing a ruckus, or drawing attention that the family is more than it seems. How adept is the pack at subterfuge and stealth? And what if they discover one of the Kin might be on the verge of Changing after all?

- **Information War:** A few Kin go missing, and unlikely as it seems, someone's been targeting their Kin-Fetches. A tech-savvy Black Spiral Theurge has innovated a new way to track and detect Kin-Fetches via corrupted Weaver magic. Can the players successfully track his data trail without getting too entangled in the Weaver's net? Can they devise effective countermeasures, or even find a way to hijack the Spiral's own methods?

- **Unknown Cousin:** The pack meets a stranger wearing the brand of a Kin-Fetch, but after asking questions and consulting records, they discover she's not from any known Kin bloodline at all. Some investigation reveals that she could be callow Kin, the descendant of a cadet branch thought lost a hundred years ago. How does she have a Kin-Fetch on her, then? Was it placed by a mysterious, possibly Ronin relative? Did it attach *itself* to her after its previous host died, and if so, *how*?

- **Presumed Extinct:** A strange Kin-Fetch appears at the caern, alerting the sept to the Change of a new Garou. To the surprise of all, the Kin-Fetch is tied to one of the Lost Tribes. How could it still be bound to a charge after all these years? Is there a new cub out there with the pure blood of the fallen? Has someone found a way to call on the Kin-Fetches of lost tribes? Is it a trap?

Skin Dancers

Once upon a time, a Kinfolk figured out something terrible. If you took the skins of five Garou and performed a blasphemous rite, you'd become a werewolf yourself. That man, the Skinner, is long gone. But he taught others the trick, the euphemistically named "Rite of Sacred Rebirth." Now they're a mock-tribe, who recruit new members whenever they can get the pelts together. They call themselves the Skin Dancers, and the Garou Nation despises them.



The Skin Dancers weren't originally designed as antagonists for Kinfolk chronicles, but they're perfect in the role. They were Kin once, before they turned on their Garou relatives. They committed atrocities, maybe for understandable vengeance, maybe just out of envy and ambition. And any Kin could become one of them. A Skin Dancer is a possible threat to a character's loved ones, but also a source of valid temptation. She points out the power imbalance between the Kinfolk and their shapeshifter relatives, and offers a way to balance the scales. Her very presence raises the question, "How much do I want power?"

The Seductive Creed

One of the reasons the Skin Dancers continue to be successful is that they often get to introduce themselves. Many Garou don't like to tell their Kin that the Skin Dancers exist – that might put ideas in their heads, after all. So when a smooth-talking new friend starts talking about ideals, about how great it'd be if the Kinfolk could stand eye-to-eye with the Garou, odds are you don't even know why you shouldn't be listening.

The hard part of the pitch, of course, is the requirement of the skins. Five Garou pelts is a lot to ask. The first Skinner was a serial killer on a level most Kin can't match. But to make the question more complicated, the skins can be taken any way possible. A potential Skin Dancer doesn't have to murder five Garou. A little grave-robbing or covert cleaning work will do the trick. There's even rumor that if all five skins are deliberately bequeathed, like a voluntary organ donation, that the new Skin Dancer will be completely free of Wyrmtaint.

And if you can pull this off? Well, every Kin who knows the truth about the Garou has dreamed about Changing themselves, at least once. Most have told themselves "If I had the power, here's what I'd do with it." There's so much to be gained. And much to be lost as well... but the Skin Dancers don't dwell overmuch on that part when they're recruiting. It can get demoralizing.

The Greater Danger

The truth of the matter is that the Skin Dancers aren't that dangerous themselves, at least to the average Kin. True, some act out old grudges after the Rite, killing hated family members before fleeing into the night. But most Skin Danc-

ers would rather recruit or subvert than murder. Frankly, they need the numbers. No, the real danger of the Skin Dancers comes from *listening* to them. A Kinfolk suspected of Skin Dancer sympathies is at much greater risk from her own Garou cousins.

This is also the reason why it's dangerous as hell to keep secrets from your werewolf relatives. The Garou remember how the Skinner's gruesome legacy started. Secret Kinfolk societies are taking their lives into their hands, because sooner or later their wolf-blooded relations are going to equate them with the Skin Dancers.

Using the Skin Dancers

Mechanically, Skin Dancer antagonists are fairly simple. The process is much like building other Garou characters, but they tend to focus heavily on Abilities and Attributes – they had to be skilled and tough Kin to be able to collect those skins – even if only through subterfuge. Their Gift selection is a bit shoddy, and focuses more on breed and auspice Gifts, as they lack any tribal affinity. But most are good with rites, thanks to the demands of learning the Rite of Sacred Rebirth.

The Skin Dancers are fundamentally underdogs; a role we usually reserve for the protagonists. They lack the numbers and resources that help make the Black Spiral Dancers so intimidating. In order to be proper antagonists they need to be clever and ruthless; a slow-witted werewolf hunter never lasts long, blood or no. They also tend to be cults of personality, built around a charismatic and capable leader who seduces unhappy Kin with promises of retribution and power. Their threat is in subversion. They can turn a Garou's family against her – and nobody knows where best to stick the knife like family.

At the core, the Skin Dancers' complaint is understandable. But what sets a Skin Dancer apart from any other abused, resentful or rebellious Kinfolk is atrocity. Like the Spirals, the Skin Dancers are able to articulate a *reason* for what they're doing. And like the Spirals, their methods aren't justifiable – as we'd see it. But it makes sense to them. And once they've got those skins on their backs, it's all the easier to justify. Performing the Rite of Sacred Rebirth is effectively writing your own death sentence – you just have to be smart enough, hard enough, and quiet enough that the Garou don't get a chance to enforce it.

Appendix: We Are Family

If you cannot get rid of the family skeleton, you may as well make it dance.
— George Bernard Shaw, *Immaturity*

The Blackwoods: Burdens and Scars (Kenning)

In some families, being a cop is in the blood. In others, every loyal son and daughter winds up in the military. The Blackwoods are much the same way. They know the price of duty. It's a point of pride that they serve — not that they're servile, mind — but that they do what needs doing for their Garou relatives.

The Blackwoods know all about the struggle. They teach their children emergency response skills, first aid, mechanical repair, whatever it might take to get through a crisis. More directly, they help their Garou relatives by acting as cleaners. They can make corpses and evidence go away quickly and efficiently, even something as damning as a heap of fomori corpses.

But every rope frays and every chain rusts. Even the strongest back can't carry a heavy burden forever. Even the most dedicated soul can see too much. The Blackwoods can be valuable allies or well-loved family, but it may take character action to keep the clan together and heal some of their old wounds.

Using the Blackwoods

Optimally you could attach the Blackwoods to any tribe with minimum fuss. They're a pragmatic family with a lot of scars and a certain hardening, and as such, play closely to the Get of Fenris, Shadow Lord, Fianna, Black Fury, and Wendigo stereotypes. With a few tweaks (such as maybe un-Anglicizing their surname), they fit well with other tribes.

The Blackwoods have useful skill sets, enough that they'd be a bargain purchase for the Kinfolk Background, or potentially solid Allies or Contacts. Some might make good romantic interests, particularly for characters who are looking for competent partners. They could also serve as potential antagonists, if you play up their ruthless streak. They do pride themselves on making problems go away, which is bad news for characters seen as problems.

Player characters could easily be blood relatives of the Blackwoods. The family's absent patriarch isn't named by default. That's deliberate; he could be an existing Storyteller character in a long-running chronicle who goes missing at some point, a name from the player characters' preludes, or even a relative. (If you'd like a default deed name, use "Blood-on-the-Bricks.")

Family History

The Blackwoods have been kenning for several generations. They're used to harsh-but-fair treatment from their Garou relatives; they're stoic in the face of disdain, and hard-working and helpful enough to earn praise. This particular branch followed their relatives to their current location, and settled in once their shifter cousins attached themselves to the local caern. In the last twenty years or so, they got into the "cleaner" business. After a couple of years doing it the hard way, "Discretion Trauma Services" was licensed as a legitimate crime scene cleanup company. They've been a solid boon to the caern and the tribe, helping to maintain the Veil.

Of course, the Blackwoods have had some failures as well. Recently, their patriarch — a noted Garou warrior — was badly wounded in battle. His family took him home to recuperate, but it did no good. He died of his wounds in the Blackwood homestead. It left a small black mark on the family reputation. And if the rest of the sept knew the whole story, that mark would be much bigger.

The Family Secret

It was justified. Everyone there knew that was the case. But the fact of the matter is, the Blackwoods are kinslayers. They killed one of their own — a Garou, one of Gaia's rare soldiers — and then they made the evidence go away. The surviving members of the family guard this secret for all they're worth, because Kin families, even of good breeding, have been culled for less.

Lottie's husband, the patriarch of the Blackwoods, was the second-in-command of a pack of good Renown. Unfortunately, he felt he deserved better than second place. He wasn't ambitious enough to betray his packmates, but he needed to feel in control somewhere. His family wound up taking the brunt of his frustrations. Most of it was emotional abuse, but one night he wound up letting his Rage get the better of him. His wife Lottie survived, but she'd never walk again.

The sept reprimanded him, and he lost Honor for the attack. That was it. Then he came back home, humbled and apologetic. But it didn't take long for his family to see that the shame was just putting his temper on another slow boil.

The Blackwoods had learned long ago to be pragmatic. They took precautions. Soon enough, their father came home sorely wounded by silver and poison, marks of a run-in with some old enemies. They put him to bed, and started to care for him; and when he started to lash out in his pain, they put him down.

The Blackwoods had plenty of experience doctoring corpses. The rest of his pack saw that he'd apparently died of his wounds, and they had no reason to doubt it. They offered their condolences to the family, and that was that.

So far.

PROFESSIONAL CLEANERS

Many people don't realize that crime scene cleanup is a profitable, privatized business. These cleaning companies are usually small and local, with only a few large enough to be national. They must be licensed to handle and transport biohazard material such as blood, toxic irritants like tear gas residue, drug residue in a meth lab, and other such dangerous substances. The coroner's office or other government body must release the crime scene before a cleaning company can go to work. The industry term for cleanup is "remediation." There isn't space to cover all the details in this appendix, but you can find out more about the details of crime scene cleanup with a good search engine and a little time to hunt down fascinating tidbits and ideas.

In the World of Darkness, plenty of these businesses are more than they seem. Most vampire princes find it useful to have at least one on payroll to help with potential Masquerade breaches. Pentex owns one of the national-scale businesses, a highly useful subsidiary called Sterilico — "Dedicated, Diligent, Discreet." Sterilico vans are quick on the scene of many a monkeywrenching attack, and always careful to forward some of their more profitable-seeming samples to other subsidiaries.

The Blackwood Homestead

The Blackwoods occupy a large and sprawling house, either in the suburbs or the countryside, depending on your chronicle's needs. Officially, they run two businesses out of the home: a struggling catering business (mostly a cover) and Discretion Trauma Services. The place has a spacious kitchen, plenty of bedrooms (including some set aside for Garou to crash or convalesce), and a very well-equipped basement with a storm-cellar entrance.

Their large detached garage is practically a coach house. It houses both the catering and cleanup vans, with a two-room loft above.

The homestead also houses a secret related to the deceased patriarch. It might be a panic room sealed against the Umbra, a buried cache of talens stolen from the Wyrm, a hidden account number, any number of things. Select something appropriate to the patriarch as you've defined him. The Blackwoods either know about the secret and are



looking for the right person to pass it on to, or don't know about it and are about to be visited by someone sinister who does. Whichever sounds more interesting.

The Blackwood Family

Lottie Blackwood, the Matriarch

Charlotte Blackwood was a good wife. She knew it'd be difficult marrying a Garou and bearing his children, but she was raised to be up to the challenge. She even came to love her husband in a way, although he made it hard sometimes. But she genuinely loved their children, every one.

That horrible night when the claws tore through her back and hips, Lottie thought she was done for. She wondered if her last thoughts would be wondering what she'd done wrong. But her kids were there for her, and Darren's quick attention helped her pull through. She couldn't go to the hospital, though, not with those claw wounds. Family care took away the pain and helped her regain her strength, but it couldn't help her walk again. She wanted to curse her lot, but that's not what a Blackwood does.

The death wasn't her idea. When her husband reappeared, all torn up by silver and poison, she was resigned to helping him get through this again. But she recognized

the look in her kids' eyes. These days, she suspects she's damned for that moment when she locked eyes with Gina and slowly nodded.

Lottie's a proud woman. She does as much as she can to still run the household, though grudgingly she's let Gina absorb some of the tasks that require quicker mobility, such as reporting in to the tribe when an alert's been sounded. Sometimes she misses her husband terribly, and sometimes she curses his memory. Her family loyalty is ironclad, and few things rattle her more than the thought of her children being endangered because someone found out their secret.

Lottie is a middle-aged woman with heavy gray in her hair. She's confined to a wheelchair, and keeps a silver knife strapped under the seat. She still has a fair measure of strength, and even a surprising reserve of humor.

Gina Blackwood, the Oldest

The elder daughter of the Blackwood family, Gina's also the one carrying the most responsibility. She oversees the Discretion Trauma Services business, which employs her younger brother Darren and a few other Kinfolk from around the sept. She also sees to those family affairs that her mother can no longer easily handle. Gina is tough as nails, and runs well even on very little sleep. She has an earnest

desire to prevent her family from suffering, which is part of what got the Blackwoods where they are.

While her siblings helped her, Gina was the one who finished the job with their father. She was also the one who directed the cleanup effort, and made sure that only the right people were around to tell their Garou relatives what happened. The whole affair took a heavy emotional toll on her, but she's borne up with an iron will. The others know she'd do it all over again, and the thought scares most of them.

Gina is a handsome woman in her early 30s, usually with her hair tied back. She has a few burn and cut scars on her hands, and hasn't put on makeup in the last couple of years. For all that, she'd make a stately figure if she dressed for a formal occasion; she certainly carries herself with a determined dignity.

Jesse & Anna Blackwood, the Troubled Couple

Jesse is the older son of the family, at about 30. He and his wife Anna run the catering business; not only does it provide some extra income for the Blackwoods, but the business' van has come in handy for a few discreet errands.

Jesse doesn't just cook, he also gathers certain herbs and reagents for the tribe. He and Anna have had trouble conceiving, particularly as their sex life hasn't been much to speak of recently. He finds it a little too easy to throw himself into his work, and is actually afraid of what might happen if a child breeds true.

Anna is kenning herself, from another Kin family related to the tribe. However, she's had some trouble adapting to the more hands-on approach of her in-laws. She's not as stoic as Lottie or as ruthless as Gina, and it's starting to fray her nerves. She does love her husband, and although she has her suspicions about her father-in-law's death, she'd never willingly betray them. But the stress is mounting, and sooner or later she just might make a mistake.

Darren Blackwood, the Healer

Darren is Gina and Jesse's younger brother, and made it partway through premed before family affairs called him back home. He has a wide range of medical skills from EMT training to older Garou remedies. He works part-time as a paramedic, but also joins the cleaning business from time to time. He's the most troubled by their father's murder, but his mother's suffering keeps him telling himself they were in the right.

Darren is in his mid-20s, with a fair share of the family good looks; he's athletic, good with his hands, and has a charming if somewhat nervous smile. His bedside manner leans a little too much toward gallows humor for most people's tastes. He knows how to fight, but has nightmares sometimes about how easy it would be for a Garou to tear him apart.

Maggie Blackwood, the Historian

Maggie is the youngest of Charlotte's children. She completed a degree in library science recently, and serves the family as a researcher. She's savvy with the Internet, although only an amateur programmer. She'd need instruction to become a dedicated hacker, though she has the intelligence for it. Her room is crowded with books, and the annotations are in a code she developed herself. She grew up afraid of her father, even though she mourns him.

Maggie is a sharp-eyed woman in her early 20s, whose dress tends to lean toward library chic. She can be squeamish for a Blackwood at times, mostly where injured animals are concerned. She has a genuinely curious spirit, and wants to learn whatever rites she can as a Kin. Maggie knows enough about the spirit world to respect its dangers, but she doesn't let fear keep her away from the possibility to learn.

Paul Blackwood, the Clever Cousin

Paul doesn't live at the Blackwood homestead. He's a cousin on Charlotte's side, kenning but with less responsibility. He works for Discretion Trauma Services and gets along reasonably well with Gina. Paul wasn't there when the Blackwood patriarch "failed to pull through," but Gina trusted him with the secret not too long afterwards.

He puts on a sympathetic face, but what he doesn't mention is that he thinks the murder was wrong. He only saw the patriarch during the best of times, and although there's no arguing that Lottie's in a wheelchair now, he still has a hard time thinking of the patriarch as the one who did it. At present, Paul's wondering if he should notify someone about the incident. He doesn't want his cousins to die, but he thinks they should be punished. He just doesn't know how the sept would react. And he's weak enough that a potential payout might shift his decision.

Paul is in early middle-age, with a lot of smile lines and an easy salesman's patter. He's fussier about his appearance than most Blackwoods, and likes to dress up. Around actual Garou, his demeanor becomes respectful and a little awed.

Story Seeds

- **Whistleblower:** Paul's looking for the right person to maybe tell about the Blackwood family secret. The "right person" would be someone who would exact justice without slaughtering his cousins outright, someone who would protect Paul from any possible retaliation, and optimally someone who would advance his station out of gratitude. He starts sniffing around one or more player characters, or if they seem too loyal to the Blackwoods, to some of their rivals.

- **Tough Stains:** The Blackwoods are called in for another cleanup, one with a good deal of Wyrmbrood evidence to dispose of. The task proves less routine, though, when a small overlooked fetish turns out to have something...

infectious to it. It's a simple knife, ideal for cutting tendon and muscle, enough so that it becomes part of the cleanup crew's equipment. How long will it be before someone notices that one of the Blackwoods has fallen under the ugly ritual tool's spell?

- **The Heirloom:** When the family patriarch passed, he left behind a potent fetish, possibly even a klaive. The Blackwoods have no right to it, but they want to see it placed with a worthy Garou — one not likely to injure his own. They invite an honorable player character out to the homestead as a possible inheritor, and pass on a “last request” from Lottie's husband. What's so important that they'd risk lying to a Garou? Will the character's pack draw the attention of an available Blackwood, or be drawn into family intrigues?

- **Skin Dance:** The family cleanup practice has given a Blackwood a singular opportunity. After a bloody final encounter with a Black Spiral pack, the Garou called in the clan to dispose of the corpses. But one of the Blackwoods got some interesting letters from a Skin Dancer some time back. Now there are five Black Spiral pelts bundled up and stowed in the basement. Will the characters find out before their relative enacts the Rite of Sacred Rebirth? And if so, will they even try to stop the ritual? Or would they rather see a faithful Blackwood elevated to proper werewolf strength, even via very improper means? If so, how far will they go to defend him?

- **Second Time's Easier:** One of the Blackwood children has a new admirer. The suitor's a full-blood Garou who's taken an actual fancy, and the rest of the tribe is willing to move along with the wedding. But the Blackwoods see something ugly behind the newcomer's eyes, a familiar kind of temper. After the first bruises appear, the family will have to decide if they're willing to kill again to protect their own.

The Millers: Myths and Moonshine (Kenning)

Moonshining families still proliferate in the backwoods and reclusive areas of many states, from the Appalachian Mountains of western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee, to the Deep South, to the hidden places in the Ozark Mountains, and in the mountains of Pennsylvania and upstate New York. For some families, making and selling un-taxed liquor (or corn alcohol) has become a household tradition; for others, it provides a convenient way of staying off the grid while still providing food and shelter for the family.

For the Millers, moonshining not only allows them to stay out of the mainstream of public life, it also provides this family of kenning Kinfolk a way to share Gaia's bounty

with their Garou kin, and others fortunate enough to taste their special spirits.

The Miller children grow up learning a lot of survival skills useful in backwoods or wilderness terrain. They also know how to repair many kinds of machines, from stills to automobiles, and have some first aid and firearms skills. They may also excel in stealth and evasion, particularly if they have any scrapes involving their illegal livelihood.

Like many moonshiners and mountain or backwoods folk in general, the Millers are independent minded, unappreciative of interference from the government or any authority. They do the minimum necessary to escape the attention of the law, revenuers, and social service agents.

Although the Millers might initially come off as stereotypical “hillbillies,” on a closer look they exhibit many tendencies that set them apart from the norm and make them useful in a Kinfolk chronicle.

Using the Millers

Typically, the Millers fit the Bone Gnawer tribe without a lot of tweaking. They would work just as well, however, as Fianna — given a more Celtic name — or Children of Gaia. With a slight stretch, this family might be a poor offshoot of a Silver Fang line of Kinfolk, with the potential for family embarrassment that might hold. Their surprisingly diverse personalities and skill sets make them good Allies as well as a useful example for the Kinfolk Background. They are also a colorful lot, with enough good humor and sometimes bawdy mannerisms to provide some much needed comic relief, should the Storyteller choose to emphasize that aspect of the family.

On the other hand, the Millers have a rough-and-tumble side to them. Their moonshine activities leave them with no love for the law, with some exceptions. While they generally dislike police, whether patrolmen, state troopers, or federal marshals, they admire bravery and applaud the job that law enforcement often performs as first responders in disasters. The Miller sons aren't above a little ambulance chasing themselves, seeing it as a way of testing themselves.

The Millers could serve as an extended Kinfolk family for any of the characters, with the addition of another child to the main branch or the invention of another aunt or uncle from any place in the country. Initially suspicious of strangers, once characters have been vetted by another family member, or by a Garou known to them, they prove to be warm-hearted people, generous to a fault, and willing to help out one of the “Kin.”

The Family History

The Millers, according to them, have always been “wolf-kin,” and family stories bear testimony to the presence of Garou in their lives for generations. The family founder

arrived on the continent with the first of the Europeans to settle the backwoods of the American continent. Unlike many of the “Wyrmscomers,” however, they made friends with the native Garou and their Kin. Since they belonged to the lowest of classes in the Old World, they brought little with them to the New World and felt no kinship with the landed or propertied folk whose actions shaped the English colonies. Rather, they identified with the downtrodden, which included the native tribes. As Kinfolk, they stood out to the Uktena, from whom they learned about the ways of the land. When a land-hungry U.S. government forced the native tribes further and further west, the Millers helped hide some of the Uktena Kinfolk for a time, discovering in the process, a set of caverns that today serves as their homestead.

The departing Uktena left the Millers two of their most sacred charges: a small wolf pack that they have tended even when wolves were nearly hunted to extinction, and a Bane that the Uktena Theurges captured and bound years before the advent of the Europeans. The Millers keep these two secrets with a seriousness of purpose that belies their easy-going, laid-back surface.

The Miller Homestead

They never intended to dwell in a cutting-edge, eco-friendly, earth-sheltered home. The earliest Millers lived in a wood

and mud cabin, like many of the other mountain families. When they intervened to hide a group of Uktena Kinfolk in a cave system the family pointed out to them, they discovered what they felt was a more natural way to live. The Uktena Kin eventually moved west to rejoin their native tribe and search the West for more Wyrms creatures, leaving behind the caves where they had recently made their home.

Over the years, the Millers have embellished on the cave, working with the rock to create sturdy and attractive walls and level floors. In the mid-1900s, the Miller boys thought it would be a good idea to build a wood cabin façade in front of the main cave. There, they could present a semblance of “normal rustic life” to any visitors from the outside. They could also have a few modern conveniences on display, such as a radio, telephone, and, later, a television, without raising too many of the wrong eyebrows.

The cave system is quite large and “airy,” making use of a few natural openings as windows to let in light and fresh air. Trees and other vegetation conceal the openings from casual viewers, though someone who knew what to look for might spot signs of shaped or chiseled rock, particularly near windows and doors.

Within the “house” are several spacious rooms, including a bedroom for each family member, guest rooms or alcoves, a natural “hot tub” that uses water naturally heated from



THE SECRET CAVE

A narrow passage, not easily navigable except for those in Lupus form, leads from the main cave system to a smaller cave. Uktena mystical symbols depicting the capture and binding of the Bane called Warps-the-Land, adorn one of the cave walls. In the center of the cave floor lies a circle barely visible to the eye in the material world. In the Umbra, this circle is a doorway to the prison that holds Warps-the-Land bound in uneasy slumber and immobility. Three seals hold the doorway closed.

Before the Uktena bound the Bane, the land suffered periodic severe earth tremors (measuring 4-5 on the Richter scale). Each tremor left some sort of poison ground or plant in its wake. Left to roam freely, it would have eventually corrupted the area for miles around, rendering it uninhabitable for anything other than Wyrms creatures.

The patriarch of the Miller family visits this cave every three months to renew the bindings. This ceremony requires a ceremonial bloodletting (of the patriarch's blood), the burning of certain herbs, and the recitation of prayers to the spirits of the rocks and land to renew the bindings.

John Miller has not yet told the secret of the cave and its contents to either of his sons. As soon as Billy-Bob seems ready to take on some of the responsibility for tending the Bane, however, John intends to bring him into the cave.

deep within the earth. A river (actually a stream) literally flows through the house, enabling not only indoor plumbing, but supplying fresh mountain water for the family business, located deep within the caverns.

The Miller Family

Detailed below are the major family members. The Storyteller or the players should create other children to fill out the family according to their chronicle's needs.

John-Jacob Joe-Bob Miller, the Patriarch (Garou)

The family patriarch looks like a "mountain man," like any you could find in the Carolina or Tennessee backwoods, the Ozarks, or just about any place where hillbillies make

their homes. Like many men and women who live sufficient to themselves, John (his public name) wears many hats, seemingly with names for each role he plays within the household. John (or John Jacob) Miller runs the family business when he is not doing active duty as a Theurge for his nearby sept. As Joe-Bob Miller, his neighbors know him as a taciturn, but not unfriendly individual, who sometimes visits one of the local watering holes, shows up with his family in tow for community gatherings, such as house-raising, funerals, pot-lucks, and the like, and occasionally allows folks to persuade him to pull out his fiddle and entertain them with familiar songs and the occasional original melodic composition.

Members of his pack and his sept call him Eyes-of-the-Forest, both to acknowledge his duty as bane-tender and his habit of searching for Lost Cubs or newly-Changed lupus Garou.

At home, his wife calls him "Husband" (as he calls her "Wife") in public. His children call him Dad, or Daddy, and his siblings call him ThreeJay. He derives some humor from all his names, remarking that all those "people" who live inside him help keep his magic honest. Though he seems laid back, he is never still, always keeping busy with something. He enjoys keeping up with events in the outside world as well as within the sept, but prefers to get his information narrated by others. He reads a few old favorite books for pleasure. His favorite man-made object, other than his still, is a police-radio and scanner, which allows him to track all kinds of activity in his community.

John is a lean man in his early 50s, his body wiry without an ounce of spare fat on him. He wears his sandy hair (now showing signs of grey) long enough to cover his ears and occasionally shoves it out of his eyes when it gets too long in front. He wears a ball cap or a well-worn fedora when he needs to. Jeans, work shirts, heavy flannel shirts, and hunter's jackets make up most of his wardrobe, along with work boots and rope sandals, for inside the house. In wolf-form, he is a tawny-colored wolf, rangy and "noble" looking. His amber eyes speak of many secrets in any of his forms.

Billie-Jean Mahoney Miller, the Matriarch

The matriarch of the Miller family, born Billie-Jean Mahoney, married John Miller when she was 17 and he was a few years older. When she was a senior in high school, her parents took her with them one night to a meeting with another family, introduced her to John, and told her she was going to marry him as soon as she graduated. She had been promised to him years ago. Fortunately for her, she fell in love with John immediately, thinking he was a much better catch than most of the boys she knew.

Until she met her husband, Billie-Jean had no idea that Garou existed or that she was Kinfolk. Her parents, unable to decide how to explain themselves to their only child, simply

delayed having “the talk” with her. They left it up to John to initiate his young wife into the mysteries of Kinfolk living.

All things considered, Billie-Jean took the knowledge quite well. After a few demonstrations, she believed the wild story he told her. By the time she met the members of his sept and of his pack, she knew how to conduct herself. John told her to just be herself and all would be well.

After high-school, she attended community college and got an accounting degree so she could manage the money from the family’s moonshine business and from her own modest job as a seamstress extraordinaire. Any kind of needlework comes easily to her, and their house enjoys the beauty of her hand-crafted and designed quilts, blankets, embroidery and knotwork.

Happily, for John, she also excels at birthing children. (Storytellers or players should feel free to add children to this family as needed; only a few are detailed here.)

Billie-Jean stands a few inches shorter than John, but her natural poise and sense of dignity make her appear as tall as her husband, if not taller. Her dark hair is worn long, and usually coiled at her neck or piled high on her head. She dresses simply in clothes of her own make, and always looks “catalog” pretty. She carries a little more weight for her bony frame than she would like, but John enjoys the soft “cushion” of her body. Her face shows years of hard work and several children, but maintains a placid sweetness that finds peace from within herself. She is religious, but not fanatically so. She enjoys singing the hymns from a copy of the Broadman Hymnal that she keeps by her upright piano.

Billy-Bob Joe-John Miller (Garou)

John-Jacob had a “feeling” when he went into the woods two years ago in search of the wolf pack that he regularly keeps an eye on. When he emerged from the woods several days later, he had a young boy with him, a lanky youth in the long-legged, wild innocence of his early teens. He and Billie Jean named him Billy-Bob (after Billie Jean) Joe-John (after John) and plopped him into the middle of their family.

Billy-Bob learned the ways of humans quickly, but he especially liked the ways of turning corn mash into fine, smooth moonshine. He often spends time in the cavern that houses the still, listening to the sounds made by the machine as it works its magic on the corn.

When John-Jacob introduced the Cub to his sept, they determined that Billy Bob was a Theurge, and John agreed to teach his “son” the ways of the Crescent Moon. Within a year, Billy Bob had mastered the basics, aced his Rite of Passage, and was ready to join with a pack. He has proved reluctant to do so. He had a deep loyalty to his human family, and to the business of making moonshine, and shows no inclination of wanting to leave yet another family. Both the sept and his adopted family are waiting, with mixed feelings, for the time to come when he must leave to do battle for

Gaia. John-Jacob intends to initiate Billy-Bob into the ways of bane-tending, but hopes he can have the experience of pack life first.

Billy-Bob is almost tall (around 5’10”) and gangly, with straw-colored hair that occasionally sees a comb and usually hangs around his shoulders and falls into his eyes. He dresses for comfort. His eyes are a pale amber, not unlike John-Jacob’s eyes. John has never denied being Billy-Bob’s natural father, but then, no one has ever asked the question of him. Billy-Bob is smart, soaking up knowledge wherever he can find it. He speaks rarely, but always to the point, often interprets things literally, and takes being a werewolf very seriously. Although he looks almost twenty, Billy-Bob is just two years old.

John-Jacob Joe-Bob (“Junior”) Miller, Jr., the First Born

At 17-years old, Junior Miller has the dubious title of first-born son. He still has at least a year of school to finish before he can get a high school diploma, but he champs at the bit wanting to make his name as a grown-up. His “little” brother Billy Bob idolizes him and has learned a lot of his human behavior from watching Junior interact with the family and with the people who come looking for the Miller’s fine brew.

Junior enjoys the adulation of his younger brother, but finds himself more than a little jealous that the First Change hasn’t come upon him, and may not ever take place for him. Something in him insists on challenging Billy-Bob to contests of skill or strength, from shooting tin cans off a fence to seeing who can climb a tree the fastest. Occasionally, Junior cheats to make sure he bests Billy-Bob, but the Garou Cub either doesn’t notice it or ignores it, feeling that his big brother ought to win every now and then.

Junior knows that he cannot inherit his father’s Bane-tender duties unless he does undergo a First Change, but he does hope to take over the still at some point. So far he’s managed to keep his envy in line and the other members of the family try to keep him busy. But all that may change.

Junior is slightly smaller in build than his father, taking after his mother in size and coloring. He usually wears jeans and t-shirts or flannel shirts when around the house. He’s started to discover girls and frequently attends socials and church dinners with his mother. When he does so, he takes more care of his appearance and seems to find favor in the eyes of several young women his age.

Rose Apple Miller, the Eldest Daughter

Junior may be the first-born son, but he is not the oldest of John-Jacob’s children. That honor goes to Rose, a young woman of elfin grace, her mother’s dark good looks and poise, and her father’s inner strength. When she was in

school, Rose found out her closest friend was being abused by her father. Helpless to do anything about it, she told her parents what she thought was going on. A few weeks later, her friend's father had an accident that left him unable to walk and without most of his strength.

While Rose suspected that her father had something to do with it, she never pushed matters, but the incident made her sensitive to instances of abuse she encountered elsewhere. A smart child, she went to college and got a degree in education. Now she runs a school for the children in the valley where her family lives. She also travels to nearby towns to talk to family groups and school groups about domestic violence.

She realizes that, as a werewolf, her father has strong emotions and could potentially turn violent, so she has set herself to watch out for the signs. She has taken classes in self-defense to protect herself from unwanted advances.

As the daughter of a Garou, Rose also knows that her father's sept may expect her to marry one of their members. She's not sure how she feels about that, but tries to be patient. She hopes she won't find herself forced into a relationship she doesn't want.

Rose is a dark-haired, dark-eyed beauty in her early 20s. She is slender and delicate looking without being anorexic. Self-defense class and hard work around the household have strengthened her muscles, so that she is a match for many of the boys she encounters. She hopes to go back to school for more degrees, but can't make herself leave home yet.

June Bird ("Birdy") Miller, the Spinster Aunt

Birdy is John Jacob's older sister. Closest to her brother in age, she has always felt closer to him than to any other member of the family. She makes her home in a small cabin not far from her brother's cave-house. Here she raises the corn for the family business.

Birdy is a hedge witch, or wise woman. She has a great store of knowledge about herbs and can brew up a potion for almost anything. Her brother insists she talks to the corn to make it grow, and he's not far from wrong.

Birdy has never married, and while she knows that some members of her brother's sept are disturbed that she has no interest in reproducing, they respect her for the magic she shares with them when they have need.

She watches Rose carefully and is prepared to shelter her niece if she ever needs protection from an unwanted marriage.

Birdy is a medium-sized, stout (but not fat) woman in her mid-50s. She dresses in trousers for working in the cornfield, but wears dresses indoors. Her clothes are either store-bought or made for her by Billie-Jean. Her long hair shows signs of graying and she is contemplating cutting

it short. For now, she wears it coiled high on her head or tucked in under a scarf.

Story Seeds

- **The Rogue Suitor:** Rose has fallen in love with a young man she met after one of her presentations on preventing domestic abuse. What she doesn't know is that the charming, solicitous young man is actually a Black Spiral Kinfolk who thinks Rose would be a perfect mate. To complicate matters, her family has already picked out a young Garou from her father's pack as a good match for her. Instinctively, she has rejected her parents' choice and is ready to elope with her boyfriend. The characters may be drawn into the search for Rose or they may find out about her when they discover the Black Spiral Kinfolk. Romance and bloodshed may ensue.

- **Lost and Found:** The Miller's moonshine enjoys a reputation for excellence, but occasionally they brew a special batch for special occasions, using water from the local sept's caern along with their own pure river water. One such batch, intended for a special sept celebration, has gone missing. The Millers are frantic to find it, since they have no idea what effects this particularly potent and magical brew might have on the general population. The characters may have to search the mountains to find the missing brew. Perhaps the thieves don't know what they have and are just looking to sell some good moonshine at top prices. Or perhaps they do know exactly what they have and have some special plans for it...

- **Things Fall Apart:** The wards that have held the Bane trapped beneath the Miller's house have weakened. The family first notices the proliferation of minor Wyrms spirits in the nearby Umbra, gathering around the Miller household. Things start to go wrong around the house: food that should still be fresh spoils; furniture and parts of the house made by the Miller family starts breaking down; bad smells linger around the deeper cave rooms. John-Jacob Sr. realizes that something is happening with the Bane, but isn't sure what to do about it. He has neglected none of his duties, and neither has Billy-Bob, when he has accompanied his father. What the two Garou don't know is that John-Jacob, Jr. has tried to copy what he's seen his father do, and has accidentally weakened the wards and negated some of the spells. While Kinfolk characters aren't strong enough to fight the Bane, should it get loose, they can help figure out what's going on and get help, as well as battle some of the creatures summoned by the strengthening bane.

- **Wolf on the Prowl:** A two-year old wolf, a member of the pack that the Millers tend, has undergone his First Change and can't handle it. Separated from the pack at the time, he is now on the loose, panicked and dangerous. The hunt is on to find him, and the Millers need the characters' help. The new Garou is causing havoc in the woods. Though

he has not yet slain any humans, each day he remains on the loose, the danger grows.

- **Meet the Millers:** Kinfolk player characters either move to or visit the mountains where the Millers make their home. They received the name of one of the Millers (Storyteller's choice) as a good contact for the region, but no other information was forthcoming. This is a chance for Storytellers to have some fun as the various layers of the Millers' complicated life slowly come to the surface: as Kinfolk, as moonshiners, as Banetenders (the two Garou), and as kin to a practicing hedge witch. How the characters handle exposure to this Kinfolk family may involve serious confrontations, light romance, or mountain shenanigans.

- **Just Like in the Movie:** Someone has ratted out the Millers as suspected moonshiners, and the Feds are on the search. The family has practiced dealing with this event, and need to dismantle and store their still, hide their stores, and erase any trace of their business. Above all, they need to keep the government men (and women) away from the cave with the trapped Bane. Anything could go wrong – and at least one thing does. Enter the characters to save the day or add to the mayhem. This presents an ideal scenario for midnight car chases on twisty mountain roads, fast thinking and faster talking, fighting, shooting, and maybe some supernatural twists and turns.

The Long Strider Traveling Circus: Off-Balance on the Road (Callow)

Sometimes, a family of Kinfolk falls off the Garou grid, becoming lost to their tribe. They lose touch with any knowledge of their heritage, living their lives in ignorance of their true nature. The Garou call these “callow” Kinfolk. While they know many of these families are out there, no one has come up with a good way to rediscover them, except by accident.

The Craddock family lost its Garou connection a few decades ago and exists now mostly to keep the family together and soluble through their traveling circus. In this day and age, however, they have problems attracting audiences, and some family members think the family is cursed or haunted.

Several times in their family history, they have tried to put down roots. Within a few months, however, circumstances or wanderlust causes them to take to the road again. They keep trying to modernize their circus acts, but somehow, they remain on the “B” circuit, wondering if an “A” circuit even exists. They have recently cut out their animal acts due to pressure from animal rights groups, sending their exotic animals

to sanctuaries. Now the only animals they include in their acts are the family pets, a small, but well-cared-for menagerie.

Using the Craddocks

Because of their haunted nature, the Craddocks work best as lost Kinfolk of the Silent Striders, but they could just as easily come from Silver Fang or Shadow Lord stock, having their origins in Eastern Europe or Eurasia. They could also have the blood of the Children of Gaia running through their veins.

They have a wide variety of skills, though most of them tend toward physically active occupations. Though most of them have acts they perform for the circus, several also have skills that allow them to take on temporary jobs wherever they stop for a while, usually several weeks. They are a generally friendly family, though they tend to keep other folks from knowing more than a few surface facts about them. Both sexes tend to have a “love ’em and leave ’em” attitude toward relationships, always falling back on the family, first, last, and always.

Player characters may encounter the family and get to know them. They may discover oddities about the family that eventually lead to identifying them as callow Kinfolk. In this case, the characters may be responsible for finding and restoring a welcome group of prodigals to the Garou extended family.

The Family History

In 1919, Luiz Cradisz immigrated with his family to New York, from the new Hungarian Republic that followed the end of the First World War. The depredations of the war had ruined the family, turning a once-prosperous house of performers into a group of starving beggars. At that time, also, their patron, a distant relative who dropped in on them from time to time and always made sure they had money and prestigious bookings, dropped out of sight. The family presumed him dead, another war casualty.

Eager to assimilate into the culture of their new home, the family changed its name to Craddock and sought work in New York City. The men of the family bounced from one temporary menial job to another, while a few of the women got factory jobs that paid barely enough to keep a roof over their heads. The children got involved in the street culture, and their parents worried that they would grow up to be hoodlums or worse.

A few years of hard times in the big city convinced the family to return to their original livelihood, that of a traveling circus. Elmer Craddock, the family patriarch, borrowed money to purchase some caravan vehicles and horses and the Long Strider Traveling Circus was born.

The early years of the Circus were good ones. The Craddocks made enough money to pay back their loan and expand the size of their caravan. They made their own



costumes, purchased more animals for their animal acts, and joined the circuit of circuses and carnivals that provided entertainment in the pre-television days.

Over the years, the family periodically put down roots, settling in several states in the Midwest. Sooner or later, circumstances sent them on the road again. The Craddocks attempted to change their performances with the changing times, but somehow the “big time” eluded them.

When animal rights groups initiated their campaigns to stop the usage of animal acts in circuses, the Craddocks agreed to stop their exotic animal acts. They retired two elephants, three aging tigers, and several monkeys, sending them to approved sanctuaries. They retained their family pets, several cats, a pair of guard dogs, and a family of Chihuahuas, as well as their horses, which they incorporated in their acts with care to emphasize that the animals were not mistreated in any way.

Today, the wagons have become a small fleet of pickups, vans, horse trailers, and one semi, used to house the wagons they used for their parades into towns where they had scheduled performances.

The Family Flaw

Over the years, the Craddocks noticed strange things happening in and around their circus. Props would go missing, only

to turn up in the most unlikely places. Family members heard strange noises at night, and occasionally they would discover that someone had apparently rearranged their vehicles without disturbing any of them. More than once, several members of the family experienced the same dreams, disturbing pastiches featuring headlong flight through dark forests or eerie chases through mazes of buildings while some formless evil “thing” pursued them. Most of the Craddocks felt as if someone were watching them, not with benevolent intent.

This general sense of paranoia and malaise has been the primary motivation for the family’s reluctance to retire the circus and put down permanent roots, even though it seems that the days of the circus life are numbered.

The Craddock Homestead

The Craddocks live in several motor homes, which, along with their other vehicles, form the family caravan. When they stay in one place for any length of time, they make use of campgrounds and RV parks, where they have occasional contact with the denizens of those places.

Currently, three families make up the Craddock household. Matthew Craddock, the family patriarch, lives with his second wife Marina and their three young children in one

motor home. Matthew's oldest son, Daniel, and his wife, Olivia, along with their twin daughters and their infant son, occupy a second motor home. Cerise, Matthew's oldest daughter, her husband Alexander Paton, and their young son Christopher live in a Winnebago, which also serves, due to its size, as a general gathering place for the family when meetings are necessary.

Other Craddocks, aunts, uncles, cousins, and unspecified relatives, have single campers, customized live-in vans, or camp out in tents when the family stops over in a city. Those who don't perform, serve as drivers, maintenance, and general crew for the family.

The Craddock Family

The family members listed below make up only part of the extended Craddock family. Feel free to add or subtract family members as needed.

Matthew Craddock, the Ringmaster

Matthew Craddock has held the responsibility for the Craddock family as well as the traveling circus since the deaths of his parents in a car accident three years ago, when their truck went off an icy bridge as they were returning to the circus's winter campground near Columbus, Ohio. The deaths were ruled accidental, with several other traffic incidents occurring that night. Matthew, who was a passenger at the time, was thrown clear of the vehicle, but both his parents died on the scene.

Matthew lives with a survivor's guilt, because he had requested a ride back to the circus that night after his plans for an overnight stay in Columbus were canceled. His father agreed to come for him outside a club near the hotel where he intended to stay that evening; at the last minute, his mother decided to accompany her husband.

What Matthew has not told anyone was that on the drive home, with snow and freezing rain interfering with vision, Matthew confessed to his parents that he had been seeing a woman in Columbus and was intending on breaking up with her after one last night together. She had decided otherwise and left him abruptly, leaving him with wounded feelings and no place to stay. He believes that his father was so upset that he should cheat on his wife of only a few years that he failed to slow down crossing the bridge, despite warning signs about early icing.

Matthew does not believe he should have survived, but has since dedicated himself obsessively to his wife and young children, as well as to the circus. The thought that the circus might go under on his watch terrifies him, especially since he has known no other life.

Other family members and friends of his that do not know what Matthew knows believe that the deaths of Adam and Lenore happened as another instance of the "family

curse." Even Matthew's wife, who saw his parents leave to pick him up, swore she saw what looked like a shadowy figure tailing after the pair as they got into the car. She now believes she saw the ghost of one of them.

Matthew's job with the circus consists of introducing the acts, acting as stage manager during the show, and keeping the books, for which his accounting degree comes in handy. He has recently completed certifications for driving most kinds of commercial vehicles, and has started taking online courses in household repairs and motor vehicle repairs.

Matthew is in his late 40s, but the lines on his face add another 10 years to his appearance. He has curly black (graying) hair, olive skin, and pale amber eyes, sometimes called "wolf eyes" by his family. He is clean-shaven, but needs to shave twice a day to stay that way. He works out and does his share of the physical work for the circus, so he enjoys good health and a muscular physique. He tends to dress casually, favoring dungarees, comfortable shoes, and turtlenecks or shirts and sweaters. His features indicate strength, and he acts decisively where his family and the circus are concerned, but discerning folks can sense a fragility beneath the surface, as if he is desperately trying to keep one step ahead of everything to avoid falling apart. Matthew Craddock's past continually haunts him.

Marina Crayton Craddock, the "Swan"

Marina Crayton married Matthew Craddock a year after his first wife, Ramona, died from cancer. Marina was a close friend of Ramona and had been maid of honor at her wedding to Matthew. When Ramona received the news that she had an aggressive form of cancer, she got in touch with Marina, asking her to stay and keep her company through her final illness so that her husband would not have to choose between being with her and running the circus. Ramona lived for just six months after her diagnosis, but by that time, Marina had come to feel part of the family. It was Ramona's dying wish that her husband and Marina try to find happiness together, so a few months later, Marina and Matthew were married.

At first, the two had trouble adjusting to life with one another and without Ramona. Marina felt that Ramona's ghost was constantly watching her to make sure she made Matthew happy, while Matthew felt that Ramona's presence stood between him and his new wife. Though Marina doesn't know it, this was one of the reasons Matthew sought comfort outside his marriage in its early years.

Marina believes that it took the death of Matthew's parents to instill in him the desire to make their marriage work, and every night, she includes them in her prayers. Despite the difference in age (Matthew is 47 and Marina is 25), Marina loves Matthew and appreciates his devotion to her and to the family. Most of all, she loves their children,

twin girls Tabitha and Talitha, nicknamed “Briar Rose” and “Snow Flower,” and their infant son, Adam, named after Matthew’s father.

Marina studied ballet as a child and has incorporated her skills into her circus act. Billed as “The Swan,” Marina performs a variation on “Swan Lake” that incorporates ballet, gymnastics, and modern dance in a highly dramatic solo performance that has lately become the highlight of the circus for the adults who attend its shows.

A talented seamstress as well, Marina helps with the costumes for the performers. She also does the bulk of the cooking for the family, which has developed the habit of eating communally to save time and money.

Marina is tall and blonde, the ice princess to her husband’s swarthy earthen presence. She practices meditation, which enables her to wear a calm face regardless of what is going on, though the antics of her children often make her laugh out loud. She dresses modestly and comfortably when not performing. As “The Swan,” she is an ethereally beautiful and desirable queen of the dance.

Daniel Craddock, the “King of the High Trapeze”

Matthew’s son Daniel, now 25-years-old, was born for the circus. Athletic and something of a daredevil as a child, he became infatuated with the trapeze and high-wire acts in general. A lifelong fan of the Flying Wallendas, the German-born high-wire wizards who became stars of the Ringling Brothers circus despite a history of deadly falls. Determined to work in their tradition, Daniel studied the art of the high wire and the trapeze with anyone who had something to teach him.

Like his heroes, Daniel works without a safety net, a constant bone of contention between him and his wife, Olivia. His increasingly dangerous acts now serve as the primary draw for the circus, so that even if he wanted to play it safe, he would refuse in order to keep attracting an audience.

When he is not practicing or designing more-and-more dangerous acts, Daniel helps maintain the fleet of vehicles and also assists with costuming, having a little knowledge gained from winters spent working for a tailor and from high school home economics classes.

Daniel is a slightly smaller, wirier version of his father. He wears his curly hair long and has lately taken to wearing a mustache, though the jury is still out on that. He dresses in clothes that accentuate his superb physique, considering himself a walking advertisement for his act. He desperately loves his wife, but he loves danger more. This may not bode well for the future.

Olivia Hines Craddock, the “Firebird”

Olivia Hines has loved Daniel for most of her life. Her father, now deceased, was a longtime friend of Matthew

Craddock. Olivia and Daniel grew up together, got into trouble together, and shared a love for taking risks.

A talented acrobat and horseback rider, Olivia has her own acts in the circus, and draws a crowd that enjoys not only beauty and skill, but the sight of a woman on horseback performing as one mystical creature. Together with Cerise, Daniel’s sister, the two women form a bareback duo that consistently thrills the crowd.

As “The Firebird,” Olivia performs her acrobatic skills, incorporating the use of fire into several parts of her act. Unlike her husband, however, she always works with a net and keeps arguing for him to do likewise. Growing up has inculcated a sense of responsibility for personal safety in her that apparently escaped her daredevil husband.

Olivia is a fiery red-head with the body of an athlete and the face of an angel. She styles her long-red hair according to her act, wearing it in an elaborate up-do as “The Firebird,” to keep it away from the flames, and wearing it long and flowing or else in a long braid for her equestrian act. She is unable to conceal her feelings and is vocal about expressing her opinions, even when she thinks someone (i.e., her husband) is acting like a fool.

Alan Paton, the “Leader of the Pack”

Alan Paton always dreamed of being in a circus. He had a gift for hitting things — not so much other people — and not with his fists, but with his throwing arm and his keen aim. An expert knife thrower, crack shot with rifle, pistol, and bow and arrow, he took advantage of the arrival of the circus in his small Minnesota town to pitch his expertise to the Craddocks. He also spotted young Cerise Craddock and attracted her attention. Adam Craddock hired him on the spot.

While polishing his various acts, Alan also demonstrated his ability with the family animals, particularly the dogs. Somehow, he was able to convince them to perform extraordinary tricks, such as jumping through fiery rings and walking across wires suspended in the air. Only someone extremely discerning in reading the language of animals could tell the obedience given by the dogs was due to their fear of and intimidation by Paton.

Although Alan and Cerise have been married for 13 years, their relationship is anything but smooth. Cerise puts a brave face on her feelings for her family, knowing that Alan has become a valuable part of the circus, but she has been the victim of Alan’s emotional and verbal abuse almost since the beginning. By strategically granting and withholding his affection and approval and using his skill with words to degrade Cerise when she acts without his approval or permission, he keeps her in a constant state of nervous tension, ready to jump if anyone so much as touches her or speaks harshly to her. In all their years together, Alan has never once touched Cerise physically to hurt her. Instead, he uses his physical attractiveness to dominate her,

making sure she realizes that she is his possession, and that he could hurt her – or their son – anytime he so desired. Cerise has never challenged him, nor has she spoken of it to any of her family.

Alan's most proud possession, however, is not Cerise but their son, Gideon. Alan takes great care to ensure that Gideon loves him totally and that the boy will do almost anything to please his father. He practices great patience and understanding with Gideon, in sharp contrast to his actions toward Cerise, and he has noticed that his son now tends to look at his mother with the same judgmental bias as Alan. Deep down, Alan knows he is preparing Gideon for something. He just doesn't yet know what it is.

The truth of the matter would probably horrify Alan if he knew it. Not only has he married into a family of callow Kinfolk, he is, himself, a member of a family of Black Spiral Dancer Kinfolk, deliberately kept in innocence by the tribe and used to locate and seduce Kinfolk of other tribes in search of more Black Spirals. Alan's "handler" is a Black Spiral Theurge, who uses his Gifts to coerce Alan from a distance to take certain actions. From childhood, Alan has been conditioned to act in certain ways, developing his subtle style of abuse to a fine point. A tour of duty in the army, after going to sniper school during training, honed not only his skill with ranged weapons, but his ability to take lives without qualms when necessary.

Alan Paton is a lean, wiry man in his late 30s, with brown hair, worn army-short, handsome, but angular sharp features, and piercing dark brown eyes. He exudes a feral magnetism that draws people of both sexes to him and allows him to influence them without appearing to give them anything for their efforts except for a grudging nod of approval. He dresses in black, both for its dramatic sense and because he looks his best in very dark colors.

Cerise Craddock Paton, "Princess of the Dance"

Matthew's first-born, and Daniel's older sister by six years, Cerise lives to dance. In her younger years, she wanted nothing more than to be a classical ballet dancer, but the family's peripatetic life style made studying at any one place an impossibility. Nevertheless, Cerise took lessons whenever she could, encouraged by parents who saw the usefulness of her growing talent as both a dancer and a fledgling contortionist.

Cerise's love of animals and her affinity for the family cats has enabled her to create a humorous "cat act" that has proven to be one of the lighter highlights of the circus. Using costuming and tricks, she coaxes the cats to maneuver through a series of obstacles, walk on their hind paws, and generally charm anyone who has ever fallen for silly cat videos. Together with her sister-in-law, Olivia, Cerise also performs on horseback, to the thrill of the audience.

Her solo act consists of a combination of dance movements and demonstrations of physical flexibility and contortion to rival some of the top Chinese acrobats. She obviously takes great pleasure in her accomplishments, relishing the accolades of the audience with a radiance that can only be genuine.

While Cerise receives praise through her performances, her personal life gains her nothing but emotional torture. In order to avoid the cruel, belittling remarks from her husband, and, now, even from her son, Cerise has learned to dress according to what Alan wants her to wear, speak only when spoken to, eat sparingly to avoid accusations of becoming "too fat and ugly to perform," and never to assume that any part of her life is free from criticism. She has become withdrawn and silent within the family, assuming a meekness that contrasts radically from the radiance she exhibits as a performer or the shameless exuberance she demonstrated as a child. Cerise doesn't even allow herself the release of tears, lest Alan hear her and subject her to another one of his derisive tirades for her emotional weakness. She has recently contemplated suicide, but the thought horrifies her. Still, sometimes it seems that anything would be preferable to the life she lives now.

Tabitha Craddock ("Briar Rose") and Talitha Craddock ("Snow Flower")

Although they are still toddlers, the two-year-old twin daughter of Daniel and Olivia Craddock already demonstrate both an uncanny intelligence and an eerie ability to communicate with one another without speaking. In addition, they show no fear of animals and seem to understand them innately. The dogs, cats, and horses of the family likewise regard the pair of toddlers as beings that need protection and worthy of affection. What they will become remains to be seen.

Gideon Paton (The Troubled Child)

At 11-years-old, Gideon Paton has already displayed a great interest in the family business, although he longs for the days when the big animal acts were in demand. He understands that animals shouldn't be mistreated, but he has a fascination for the big cats, bears of all kinds, and, most especially, wolves. Lately, he has begun having strange dreams and has developed a craving for raw meats of all kinds. He found bliss when he discovered sushi, at age 6, but now that he has had his first taste of steak tartare, he feels he can never go back to medium rare again. He has fantasies of being a big predator, and sometimes acts out stalking his prey (the family dogs and cats) during play times. He is learning tumbling and acrobatics, but really wants to learn to fight.

Gideon takes after the Craddocks' side of his family, for the most part. With a wiry build, dark curls, and an

olive complexion, he already shows signs of becoming a very handsome man. From his father, Gideon has inherited a judgmental streak, particularly toward his mother, whom he now sees through his father's eyes. He does not yet understand everything he feels emotionally about his parents, but he knows that he will do anything for his father's approval, and that his mother is a weak individual without any fighting spirit. While his parents believe he is a happy child, Gideon is troubled by his dreams and by the feeling that something in his short life is about to end.

Story Seeds

- **All in the Family:** One night, after the circus' last performance in a small town, the howling of the dogs alerts the family to something wrong. The family's search for the reason for the disturbance results in the discovery of Cerise's body, lying in the stall of her favorite horse, an empty bottle of sleeping pills still in her hands. She is barely breathing, and can be saved, depending on the family's actions. This leads to an attempt to discover what led her to this dark place. Resulting investigations might alert the family to the hidden abuse going on in their midst. The outward ripples (the possibility that Cerise may seek counseling; Alan's reluctance to do the same; suspicions of murder if Cerise dies) may alert either local Garou or the Black Spiral watchers (or both) of the Craddocks' existence. The family may be in for a supernatural surprise.

- **The Haunting:** The eerie happenings that have surrounded the Craddocks suddenly takes a frightening turn: the toddler twins, Tabitha and Talitha, suddenly assume their pet names for real, insisting that they are Briar Rose and Snow White. At first the family may believe that the duo has contracted a case of "princess fever" and that the phase will soon pass. When the twins seem to be at the center of a metaphysical whirlwind of poltergeist effects, exhibitions of glossolalia, actual power over the animals, and other supernatural effects, the family may seek outside help for their problem. Child psychologists prove to be a dead end. The family may seek an exorcism, but find that the usual kind doesn't work either. The situation threatens to get out of hand, alerting the supernatural community of trouble brewing on the fringes of their society. This might be the seed for a cross-over chronicle involving Garou, mages, Changelings, and wraiths – even vampires – in a race to find a solution and assert a claim on these tiny sources of immense power.

- **Return of the Lost Flock:** A Garou pack starts having strange dreams, in which people they have never seen before seem to cry out for help. These oddities persist until one evening, during a moot called to discuss the matter, a Fetch appears with news of a Firsting. The only problem is that the Fetch can provide little information as to the location of the family involved, since something is now blocking it. The

Garou's search for the Craddocks involves doing battle with the spirits placed to watch the family by the Black Spirals before they can locate the Craddocks and spirit Gideon to safety – and perhaps inform the Craddocks of their proper place in Garou society.

- **As the Wyrms Turns:** In another ghostly variant, the instances of Craddock family hauntings increase dramatically, with Matthew as their focus. Despite the difficulty in tracking down family history, due to their transient lifestyle, members of the family, or perhaps Matthew himself, may try to discover information regarding the death of his parents, something for which Matthew blames himself. When he uncovers actual information from police and, possibly, hospital records, he discovers that his parents' death was not accidental, but instead was the product of an unknown perpetrator. Attempts to track down the murderer after so many years may ultimately lead to the discovery of a true supernatural connection in the family's history and to their eventual outing as a family of Kinfolk. This type of chronicle could take the form of a mystery or a police procedural, until the Wyrms spirits and werewolves responsible for the crime come to light. Fans of the *Supernatural* TV series might enjoy a combination of mystery and horror.

- **The Return of the Wolf:** Either through the Silver Fangs' genealogical information network or through dabbling in social media's ancestry websites, a Garou has turned up the Craddock name as one that formerly belongs to her tribe's Kinfolk. Now the game is afoot, as Garou involve Kenning Kinfolk in a search for the lost family. Once the Garou locate the Craddocks, they must decide how to break the news. Kinfolk might come in handy as go-betweens until the inevitable "show-and-tell" session. This story enables Storyteller and players to focus on how callow Kinfolk become Kenning.

The Garrisons: Birds Without Borders (Kenning)

To call the Garrison Family "professional Kinfolk" would be both literally and metaphorically true. For generations, their line has faithfully served the Corax – specifically the Hermetic Order of the Swift Light – in whatever way each individual family member was best suited for. In the past, they've been warriors and wheelwrights, torturers and tax collectors, smugglers, scribes, and stevedores. Modern times are no different; the skill sets have just changed over the years.

Now the Garrisons fill (for the most part) white collar professions for the Order: teachers, scientists, bankers, lawyers, information technologists. They're part of the infrastructure that keeps the First World running, and through

their extended network, provide valuable services and access to vital information for their Corax kin.

The Garrisons have their own motivations, desires, shortcomings, and secrets as well. Those who can aid a Garrison in achieving those may well find themselves with an ally for life, but no alliance is without its own strings, and the Garrison nest is a sticky wicket indeed.

Using the Garrisons

While the Garrison's primary loyalty is to the Corax, others who are able to persuade them of similar goals may find them to be a strong resource both for professional services and for information. As long as the tasks do not threaten to discredit them in the eyes of their shapeshifting relatives, convincing the Kinfolk family to aid in tasks in Gaia's service won't be difficult.

As their various assignments for the Hermetic Order of Swift Light bring them into contact with a wide variety of information sources, the Garrisons could easily serve (singularly or as a group) as Contacts, serving up plot hooks to lead the protagonists into adventure. As Allies, they have a diverse set of professional Skills that could be useful to the Garou or other Changing Breeds, assuming those who seek their aid win the Kinfolk's loyalty (or make it worth their while).

However, the Garrisons are proud, and insults to themselves or their family will not be taken lightly. Those who treat them as less than valuable because they are not shapeshifters will find their requests for aid stoically stonewalled.

While the Garrisons are "good guys," player characters might find themselves at odds with the family as well. The Garrisons take their duties extremely seriously, so if tasked with gathering information about the player characters, or taking action against them, the Kinfolk will do everything in their power to succeed. As well, if they are treated poorly as allies, they will not hesitate to retaliate. While they may be "merely" Kinfolk, the Garrisons are, to a person, strong-willed personalities, and as kenning Kin they've got a good idea about how to defend themselves and their own against those they deem as threats. They will not hesitate to pull strings, calling in favors from past allies, or use their vast array of professional skills to make life very inconvenient for those who do them wrong.

Family History

The Garrison line originates in the British Isles, and the Garrison family in the United States can trace their lineage back to the Mayflower, a fact they are exceedingly proud of. Unfortunately, that pride has encouraged them to engineer marriages predominantly from within suitable (i.e., equally-as-pure Corax Kinfolk) bloodlines. These arranged unions, generation after generation of narrowed genetic pools, have

resulted in decreased fertility rates in the family line – and the (more than) occasional mental quirk.

For years, these facts have gone largely ignored by the Garrison patriarchy, although not by the Corax themselves, who have seen fit to bestow the gift of becoming Corax less and less often on the genetically-weakened family line. Earlier generations ignored this slight, or blamed it on other factors. The current family, however, has chosen to take matters into their own hands.

Desperate to strengthen his decaying line (and perhaps restore the favor of being chosen for the Rite of the Spirit Egg upon his progeny once more), Isaac Garrison has taken action in both overt and covert fashions. He pulled in favors to bind his line with that of the Gillani's, a strong Kinfolk Corax family from Southern Asia, and rumors have it that this was neither the first nor the most significant strings the patriarch has pulled to attempt to restore his family's suitability in the eyes of their shapeshifting relatives. Ironically, it was not his actions but his daughter-in-law's which granted the family their first latent-Corax in generations.

The Family Secret

A family like the Garrisons is rife with secrets. Some are widely suspected but not spoken of. Among these is the fact that Ethan is not Isaac's son by blood. Anyone seeing the feeble physicality of Isaac, John, and virtually every other member of the Garrison line over the past few generations might suspect that perhaps some fresh blood had made it into Ethan's genetic makeup. The true secret, however, is not that Isaac was cuckolded, but that he orchestrated the arrangement himself, in an early attempt to renew his family line. The details are known only to Isaac and his late wife, but Isaac considered the "experiment" a success, initially. As the boy began demonstrating rebellion and poor intellect, however, Isaac reconsidered his original assessment, and moved forward with plans for the next generation instead.

The Garrison Homestead

Due to the nature of their various careers, the Garrisons spend a lot of time scattered around the globe, but "home" is a century-old farmhouse surrounded by five acres of farmland and forest. Isaac's great-great-grandfather had the house built shortly after the turn of the century, and multiple generations of Garrisons have settled in it ever since. John and Jacob live there now, along with John's brother, Ethan, and Ethan's wife, Tara, who moved in shortly after Mahnaz was assigned to field research.

Isaac's mobility no longer allows him to navigate the multi-story dwelling, and his pride won't allow him to install stair-lifts or other devices that might make doing so possible. Instead, he's taken a ground-floor flat in the nearby city, from which he continues to manage the Garrison clan.

Saradar still owns a luxury top-floor condo in Karachi, Pakistan (along with multiple investment properties around the world), although he moved to the United States after his recent retirement, to be closer to his daughter and only grandchild. Spry for his age, and in wonderful health, he still travels extensively, and contracts with his former employer for consultant work even post-retirement.

The Garrison Family

Isaac Garrison, the Forward Thinking Patriarch

Isaac's childhood home had been built to house dozens of children, although even a century ago, that prospect was more hopeful than likely. Years of inbreeding has cursed the Garrison line with infertility, poor health, and other genetic challenges. By the time he was born, his parents (an arranged marriage between second cousins) were both only-children, and Isaac himself was born only after his mother had suffered through numerous miscarriages, several stillbirths, and the death of his elder sister in infancy.

Isaac's family indoctrinated him to his duty in his childhood, and Isaac took his responsibilities seriously. He married the distant relative they arranged for him, and grew to respect, if not particularly love, his bride. Seeing her suffer challenges similar to those that plagued his mother in pregnancy and child-bearing, Isaac decided that the past methods of ensuring genetic purity were actually hurting the family, and set about finding a means to ensure his family line's continuation and undo some of the harm done by previous generations.

John Garrison, the Tech Geek

John was born dangerously premature, and has always been a sickly, stunted child. His intellect, however, was strong, as was his cheerful demeanor. Unfortunately, neither was enough to truly win him the appreciation of his stern and authoritative father.

From the moment of his brother's birth, John lived physically in the shadow of his younger-but-stronger sibling. Surprisingly, however, this didn't sour the elder; John not only idolizes Ethan, but developed his own (often self-deprecating) sense of humor about being rescued and protected from bullies by the younger Garrison brother.

Years spent reading, studying, and tinkering with computer bits eventually evolved into a full-ride scholarship to MIT and a successful career in Information Technology working for one of the Hermetic Order of Swift Light's satellite companies. John met Mahnaz while both were studying on the East Coast, and has no idea that their relationship was carefully orchestrated and cultivated by Isaac and whatever mundane and supernatural favors he could pull in from past allies.

Regardless of how it came to be, John loves Mahnaz and their son with all his heart. He's a dedicated father, and when Mahnaz was given an out-of-state field assignment recently, he arranged to do the majority of his work by telecommute, to spend more time with their son.

Dr. Mahnaz Garrison, the Environmental Expert

Mahnaz was born in Karachi, Pakistan, to a well-to-do professional family. Her father was an investment banker, her mother a corporate lawyer, and as their only child, Mahnaz grew up with every advantage. After her mother's "accidental" death, Mahnaz spent her teens and early twenties studying in Great Britain, before moving to the United States to complete her Doctorate in Environmental Studies.

An avid student, Mahnaz is solemn by nature, a quiet counterpart to her husband's comedic personality. Her college relationship with Coyle was a brief period of impetuosity, and one she's never mentioned to John, even after the Corax re-entered their life after Jacob's birth.

Mahnaz met and fell in love with John Garrison at university, introduced by seemingly random circumstances that were actually engineered by Isaac without his son's knowledge. The two married soon after graduation, and their son, Jacob, was born a few years later.

A talented scientist, Mahnaz has recently been assigned to a year-long field study, a job which in truth consists of installing remote sensors to monitor suspected environmental tampering by Pentex agencies. She hates being apart from her family, and keeps in touch via regular video chats and phone calls.

Jacob Garrison, the Latent Corax

Most parents believe their child is something special, but in Mahnaz and John's case, they know it to be true. Coyle, a "friend" from Mahnaz' youth, bestowed a high honor upon the young Kinfolk: The Rite of the Spirit Egg. Since then, the family has watched with bated breath for the boy to begin showing signs of his First Change.

Jacob's a good kid. Like both parents, he's slim, although at 11 it's manifesting as all knees and elbows. He's smart, but has increasing difficulty paying attention in class, so his grades are suffering. His teachers have recommended testing for ADHD, but his family believes it's simply the early signs of the spirit egg preparing to hatch and unleash his new destiny.

Ethan Garrison, the Rebel

No matter how dedicated a family line, there's always got to be one member who doesn't buy the company line. Ethan is that, in spades. The sole athlete in a family of intellectuals, Ethan focused on the physical, excelling in sports and developing into a bit of a bully. He made it



through high school on charm and cheating, and won a full scholarship for football to a state university afterwards. Poor grades and a poorer attitude endangered his college career from his first semester, however, and by the time he tested positive for recreational drugs in his sophomore year, even his coach wasn't sad to see him go. He's been bouncing around temporary jobs, doing security work and acting as hired muscle for the Order ever since.

Ethan wasn't supposed to marry Tara, who isn't Kinfolk and knows nothing about the Corax or the Garrison's duty. Showing up at the family home with his new bride in tow infuriated his father, who had planned to orchestrate his younger son's marriage just as he had the elder's. The two barely speak, although this isn't a new occurrence.

Tara Garrison, the Callow Kin

Unlike the rest of the Garrisons, Tara's not Kinfolk to the Corax. In fact, she doesn't even know they exist. Ethan married her as much to spite his family (specifically his father) as for any other reason. There's not a lot of love lost between her and her husband; their whirlwind romance turned sour before she and Ethan showed up at the Garrison homestead, and only her gold-digging nature is keeping her there at the moment.

Like her husband, Tara drinks a lot, and prefers to spend her evenings out at local bars. She's already run afoul of the local police on multiple drunk-driving incidents and if Isaac hadn't pulled some strings to get the charges dropped, she'd likely be behind bars.

Saradar Gillani, the Concerned Father-In-Law

Like the Garrisons, Saradar Gillani's family line has knowingly served the Corax for generation upon generation. His late wife, Mahnaz' mother, came from a similar line, and their marriage was an arranged one to better connect the two South Asian Kinfolk lineages. In time, Saradar and his wife came to deeply respect and care for one another, but he always hoped that his daughter would find a partner who she truly loved.

Both Gillani, an investment banker, and his late wife, a corporate lawyer, worked their entire adult lives for the Hermetic Order of Swift Light in the Pakistani city of Karachi, although through a convoluted series of holding companies and conglomerate subsidiaries that even the canniest bureaucrat would have had a hard time proving any allegiance between their employers.

When Mahnaz was in her late teens, her mother was killed in what was officially labeled a random outburst of political violence between anti-religious activists and local security forces, but Gillani, knew better. His wife had been charged with heading efforts to close down a Pentex-affiliate that had set up new headquarters in Pakistan, and her work,

while nominally successful, had resulted in an assassination order. To protect young Mahnaz, after her mother's funeral, Gillani sent his daughter to boarding school in London, but not before sharing the family's history (and its duty) with her.

Upon retiring recently, Gillani moved to the United States to be nearer to his daughter and only grandchild. He has been very hands-off with the Garrisons thus far, although he is beginning to suspect that Isaac, his counterpart in the Garrison hierarchy, may well be more devious and ruthless than the rest of his family suspects.

Coyle, the Guardian (Corax)

Although not a member of the Garrison family, per se, Coyle's fate is interwoven with theirs. She has performed the Rite of the Spirit Egg on Jacob (with Mahnaz and John's blessing), and checks in with the lad as often as her duties to the Hermetic Order allow.

Coyle was rescued by Mahnaz while the Kinfolk was still in school in Great Britain. After the corvid Corax was bitten by a plague-bearing wererat during an investigation in the sewers beneath the city, Mahnaz nursed the bird back to health, and the two became lovers for a brief and tumultuous time during Mahnaz' early university years. The relationship, however, was doomed, in no small part due to the incompatibility caused by Coyle's inhuman temperament and trickster attitude, and Mahnaz' serious nature. Despite their breakup, the pair remained friends even after Mahnaz moved to the United States to finish her schooling.

While John knows about Mahnaz saving Coyle's life, and suspects it to be a factor in the wereraven gifting Jacob with a spirit egg, he remains unaware of the depths of his wife's past relationship with the Corax.

Story Seeds

- **Friend of the Family** – One of the player character's father develops a terminal disease, and on their death bed admits a secret to their offspring: thirty some years ago, during a period of poverty, he was hired to sire a child for an infertile couple. Now, as his dying wish, he wants his child to track down the child of that transaction, and make certain they are taken care of. All evidence points to that child being Ethan Garrison.

- **Gone Without a Trace** – After months of daily remote check-ins, Mahnaz stops contacting the family, and calls to her go unanswered. Her employer assures the family that the problem is purely technical, but when days turn to weeks, the Garrisons seek aid from any source possible to track down what's happened to their beloved family member.

- **Arranged Marriage** – Saradar Gillani discovers Isaac's influences on his daughter's marriage to John Garrison, and suspects that her feelings may have been entirely created through supernatural means. She, of course, does not

believe him, so he sets out to prove his suspicions, enlisting the help of player characters knowledgeable in the mystic arts to undo whatever magic holds sway over his daughter.

- **Slip of the Lip** – During a visit to check in on Jacob, Coyle lets slip about her previous relationship with Mahnaz, not only in front of John, but the entire family. How strong are the Kinfolk's need to keep the good graces of the only Corax who has seen fit to bestow the Rite of the Spirit Egg on their line in generations? And how will this affect Mahnaz' relationship with her husband, father-in-law, and father upon her return from the field?

- **Running into Trouble** – Tara gets in yet another drunk driving accident – this time with the player characters. She is severely injured, as are both vehicles. How will the Garrisons cover up the accident, and what kind of conflict will this bring them into with the victims of Tara's recklessness?

The Grinders: Drugs and Violence (Callow)

Offspring of a half-dozen renegade Ratkin, this street gang deals in drugs, human trafficking, gun-running, and general terror. When their patriarch realized his options were limited as a homid Ratkin, he took destiny into his own hands and created his own army of followers completely and fanatically devoted to him and his cause.

Unlike most Kinfolk "families," the Grinders aren't all related by blood; instead they've been carefully gleaned from a narrow genetic pool for their loyalty to the gang's patriarch, their commitment to the family culture, and their sociopathic willingness to kill or die for the group. Whether serving as enforcers, money-makers, spies, or breeders, every surviving Grinder has a role within the gang, and has been raised from birth to fulfill it.

Even the best laid plans go astray, however. Their leader may have succeeded in creating his cohort of Kinfolk, but no reign lasts forever. As his minions grow stronger, and his power over them wanes, he may discover his family's carefully cultivated brutality directed back at their maker.

Using The Grinders

Insane and violent, the Grinders would make great recurring antagonists for an urban story arc. Considering themselves apex predators of the street culture, they're sure to run afoul of just about any player character group eventually. Well-intending player characters might think that this "human" street gang is a simple challenge, before discovering the Grinders to be much more than they seem.

While Ratkin Kinfolk may not be a long-term challenge for shapeshifters and other creatures with supernatural pow-

DRAWING THE LINE

Although the vast majority of the Grinders remain callow, that doesn't mean the Ratkin don't use them. Even after building his own criminal army, Twitch still yearns for the approval of wererat society, an obsession that makes him easy to manipulate for their purposes. When the wererat elders need meat shields, disposable operatives, or bullet fodder, they're likely to nudge Twitch to send his Kinfolk in whatever direction necessary. And, if they feel his little army is growing too strong, they may well invent "necessary" tasks, just to thin Twitch's herd down to an acceptable level.

While the Ratkin encourage the Grinders' destructive rampages, they do draw the line at activity that directly serves the Wyrms or the Weaver. Bombs, chemical weapons, and explosives are fine; if the Grinders dabble in Wyrms- or Weaver-tainted weaponry, the rat nation will definitely find a way to put an end to it (and them).

Not above using the rest of Gaia's children to do their dirty work, this might even entail bringing the Grinders to the attention of the Garou, and letting nature sort itself out.

ers, the Grinders' savvy, speed, strength, and numbers make them as difficult to ferret out as their shapeshifting kin. And, when the scales start to tip too far against the Grinders, those supernatural relatives are likely to step in. While the Ratkin see this army of human Kinfolk to be nothing more than cannon fodder – completely acceptable casualties in their own agendas – the Grinders are *their* cannon fodder. The wererats are likely to take umbrage to direct attacks against them, and they'll likely get involved in any outside efforts to wipe the gang out.

The Grinders aren't big on helping, unless it's going to further their leader's agendas, but that doesn't mean their role has to be entirely antagonistic. They're cut-throat (often literally), violent, and utterly indoctrinated into their own sub-culture from such an early age that mainstream morality means almost nothing to them, which can make them useful tools to accomplish tasks too gruesome, violent, or morally repugnant for the average street thug. In those arenas, they could be allies to the player characters, at least in the short term. Convince them that it's in their best interest, and the entire psychotic family could serve as criminal Allies or underground Contacts. Remember, however, their ultimate loyalty will always be to themselves and their own.

Family History

The Grinders were originally a gang of homid Ratkin, led by a young Knife Skulker named Twitch. As a homid wererat, Twitch was distrusted and mistreated and realized quickly that he was going nowhere within the ranks of Ratkin society. No matter how brutal, how cut-throat, how loyal he was, he'd never be fully trusted by those in charge. He formed a small gang with other homid Ratkin in similar positions but realized that, even working together, they would never amount to much in the eyes of their distrustful, shifting relatives. As the original Grinders began falling apart, Twitch desperately struggled with a way to retain power and relevance.

More than a little insane, Twitch had the idea to literally breed himself the next generation of Grinders: his own army of loyal followers, faithful minions, and meat shields willing to die for him and the causes he raised them to believe in. With the aid of almost two dozen human women – none of whom were informed about his nature or what their offspring were in for – Twitch has fathered more than a hundred Ratkin Kinfolk over the last 35 years. Between himself and the original Grinders, they are responsible for siring every existing member of the current gang.

Local Ratkin see the Grinders as little more than a suicide squad to be pointed in whatever direction requires mindless violence. Having been groomed for loyalty for decades by Twitch makes the gang simple to direct; if convinced a given target is a threat or detriment to the gang, the family becomes a fire-and-forget weapon just waiting for Twitch to pull the trigger.

The Family Secret

From the outside, the changing of the guard for the Grinders looked organic. In a world built on violence, power-grabbing, and criminal activity, death happens. He who lives by the 9-millimeter, more than likely dies by the 9-millimeter, and usually in a rather messy fashion. So, for five out of the six original Grinders to die over the course of 20 years isn't particularly surprising.

What isn't immediately obvious from the outside, however, is that Twitch specifically engineered each of the other original gang member's deaths. After using them for long enough to ensure the first generation of his Kinfolk family members were old enough to step in and begin taking over, his original crew members were potential threats, and as such, Twitch made certain they were dealt with. As well, any members of bloodlines other than Twitch's who retained a sense of loyalty to their family over the gang as a whole have been snuffed out as well. Even Twitch's own offspring (or their kids, as decades passed) were not exempt from the culling, if they didn't conform closely enough to the gang leader's concept of personal fealty.



Some were framed for crimes against the gang, and Twitch executed them under the guise of justice. Others were killed in carefully orchestrated accidents, sabotaged and left for the gang's enemies to finish off, or sent on missions they had no hope of succeeding at. By the time Twitch's eldest surviving son, Jojo, was ready to take his place at the head of the gang, the active members, blood-family or no, were all 100% loyal to Twitch and the macabre culture he'd created for the Grinders.

The Grinder's Homestead

The closest thing the Grinders have to a family homestead is Mama Gina's place. It's not fancy, or in a great neighborhood, and the house takes up almost every inch of the lot, but there's a half-dozen bedrooms which often house a dozen or more children, teens, and young adults. It's well maintained; Gina believes in a strong work-ethic, making do with what you have, and learning the skills you need from an early age.

Gina's got some strict rules for her house, and as the unquestioned matriarch of Twitch's brood, he allows her a lot of latitude in enforcing them. No criminal activities are condoned under Mama Gina's roof. No disrespect is allowed; backtalk is met with a backhand, and repeat offenses result in exile from the house entirely. Profanity is forbidden, as are alcohol and drugs. Physical violence (except for that brought down on those who violate her rules) is right out.

Some of Twitch's offspring are simply incapable of obeying the rules of the House, and choose to avoid it altogether. But for the very young, or those capable of coping with the contradiction between their life "outside" and the behavior expected of them at Gina's, the House is an inviolate oasis in an otherwise insane world.

Outside of Gina's house, the gang has dozens of apartments and warehouse facilities that they maintain for various purposes within their territory of town. Some are lesser (and more transient) versions of Mama Gina's: places where various women still raise Twitch's half-Ratkin offspring, ensuring future generations for the gang. Others are flop houses, where adult gang members live, with accommodations varying depending on the individuals' current favor with the gang. There are sites used for receiving shipments of contraband, cribs used for prostitution, drug processing and packaging locations, and business fronts that look legitimate but are used as a façade for illegal activities.

The Grinders

Twitch: the Self-Proclaimed Rat King (Ratkin)

Scrawny and premature, born to a heroin-addict Ratkin Kinfolk and her dealer, Michael "Mikey" Davis started out life with the odds stacked against him. By the time his mother knew Mikey was on the way, his father was already dead, and

the double-blow of losing her common-law husband (and her source for drugs) and finding herself pregnant pushed her even further into her addiction.

Born 10 weeks early, with no medical care, Mikey shouldn't have lived. But something in him refused to give in to death. The boy essentially raised himself, learning quickly to steal food and supplies to take care of himself when his mother couldn't. He used school mostly to avoid the nearly-condemned building they lived in, and the increasingly insane mother who ruled the roost there. When she died, the rats found her before he did. Discovering her partially consumed body sent the always-unsettled kid over the edge and spawned a nervous tic that earned him the nickname "Twitch."

The local Ratkin infected the boy when he was twelve, as much to rid themselves of him as anything else. To their surprise, he not only survived the Birthing Plague and ensuing First Change, once the initial waves of madness subsided, Twitch seemed somehow more calm than he'd been before.

In truth, however, his tranquility was actually just an obsessive focus on his own prosperity and survival – at any cost. That obsession led him to create the Grinders, a legacy which will surely outlive the now-aging Ratkin.

While Twitch is still the patriarch of the Grinders, he isn't as hands-on with the gang as in the past. At 52, Twitch is ancient for a Ratkin (and for a gang-member). His age, injuries, and years of indulging in all of the fringe benefits of being top dog has left Twitch slow, fat, and ripe for replacement.

Gina: Big Momma

While Twitch has sired over a hundred children with more than two dozen women, Gina is something special. "Big Momma" has given Twitch 17 children, including three sets of twins, over the last 27 years. Out of them, 14 are still living, ranging in ages from Jojo in his late 20s to a pair of girls not old enough to start school yet.

The children in the family, both her own and any whose mothers see fit to leave their offspring with Gina, are Big Momma's territory. She makes sure they've got health care, that they get the chance to get educated, and that they are taught the things they will need to assimilate into the gang as successfully as possible.

Beyond that, Gina doesn't get involved in what she calls Twitch's "business." She doesn't ask questions she doesn't want to hear the answer to, and she supports Twitch and the adult members of the family with her silence and by honing each new offspring into as perfect a potential new prospect for the gang as possible.

Jojo: the Shot Caller

Jojo isn't Twitch's first-born, but he's the Ratkin's eldest surviving child, and the active head of the Grinders now

that his father is taking a more hands-off role. Taller than his dad by over a foot (a legacy of his mother, Gina), Jojo is muscular enough to put the smackdown on any would-be challengers. He took the reins of the Grinders with his father's blessing and assistance, deposing Twitch's former "lieutenant" when it was discovered that the son of one of the other original Ratkin members was double-dealing on the Grinders with a rival gang. Jojo is aware that the charges against his predecessor were fake, but that didn't stop him from carrying out the execution when Twitch ordered it.

Jojo is his father's son in more than one way. His aspirations stretch far beyond serving as a loyal lapdog for his father. There will come a day – sooner rather than later – when Jojo lives up to his father's legacy, and the entire Grinder gang will be his.

Shaggy: the Hookup

If a customer wants it, Shaggy knows a guy who knows a guy who can get it for them. Meth, Uzis, imported "brides," chop-shop parts, or illegally imported cigarettes, Shaggy's got connections on anything The Grinders or their clientele might possibly want.

Shaggy's sampled more than his fair share of the illicit substances that he specializes in trafficking, lending him the burn-out personality that prompted his nickname. But when it comes to remembering sources, numbers, rates of exchange and profit margins, he's a prodigy.

Zee-Dub: the Bottom Bitch

Prostitution is a profitable enterprise, and the Grinders are not the kind to turn down an opportunity for profit. While Twitch is not morally above putting the girls in the gang into the sex trade, he knows careers in that field are short lived, women impressed into sexual servitude are often no good for anything else once their marketable time is over, and it's difficult to maintain loyalty from those who are treated like a saleable product. As such, the gang relies almost entirely upon outside prospects for this market.

As Bottom Bitch, it's Zee-Dub's responsibility to make certain that the incoming "employees" are trained, not just in service but in attitude, even if that requires addicting them to drugs to ensure their loyalty and complacency. Her role gives her authority over all of the gang's sex workers, and a certain degree of power due to the import of her duties to the family's income.

Ant: the Scout

Ant is the youngest daughter of one of Twitch's original Ratkin gang members, who was killed on a mission before the girl was born. Her mother adamantly refused Twitch's encouragement to let Gina raise the girl, and the lack of food and health care she received in her infancy probably did a lot to contribute to the girl's immature features.

Always small for her age, Angela aka “Ant” looks more like a grade school kid than a cunning 14-year-old. Her diminutive size and childlike features serve her and the gang well, however. No one pays much attention to a kid, and Ant has turned looking innocent and non-suspicious into a vital information conduit for her family. She’s also a consummate sneak thief, getting in and out of areas that most folks wouldn’t even consider possible to access.

Story Seeds

- **Spread Like a Plague** - The local Ratkin decide that Twitch’s family has been avoiding the Birthing Plague for long enough, and send in operatives to infect his line from the youngest all the way to Jojo himself. To their surprise, more than their fair share survives the rite, leading to a mass outbreak of insane gang-bangers, prematurely turned child-Ratkin, and a *very* angry Twitch, loose on the town.

- **Spare Parts** - Someone’s in the market for relics, in the religious sense: supernatural body-bits for arcane purposes. Shaggy and the Grinders may not know they’re related to the supernatural world, but if the price is high enough, they’re willing to believe that their target is. When the Grinders are pointed towards the player characters or their allies, which will be stronger? The gang’s greed, or their target’s survival instinct?

- **The King is Dead** - Twitch goes missing, sending the entire gang into a frenzy. Jojo steps up to take over, but when it becomes clear that the son has killed his father, the gang splinters between those who follow the new king and those vowed to seek revenge for the old one. The gang war spreads like wildfire, especially after the Ratkin decide to up the ante, biting the leaders of both factions and sending their already-sociopathic natures into utter insanity. Can the city survive the effects of two utterly insane, supernatural gang leaders, each hell-bent on destroying the other?

- **To The Highest Bidder** - Someone close to the player characters goes missing, and the trail leads back to the Grinders. By the time they are able to follow up, however, the target has already been drugged and bound, destined for a foreign port and sale at a slave auction. Only Twitch knows the ultimate destination, and with an entire gang willing to throw themselves in front of him, he’s not highly motivated to share the information.

- **To Catch a Thief** - Player characters catch Ant in the act, and when she is unable to make her get-away, the girl plays up the “stealing to feed my family” story. In truth, she’s been tasked with stealing information and potentially valuable artifacts from them for the Grinders. If released, she’ll keep trying, or the Grinder’s attempts to obtain the objects of their desire will get more overt.



KINFOLK

A BREED APART

Name:

Breed:

Nature:

Player:

Tribe:

Demeanor:

Chronicle:

Relation:

Concept:

Attributes

Physical

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

Social

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

Mental

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

Abilities

Talents

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

Skills

Animal-Ken _____ ○○○○○
 Crafts _____ ○○○○○
 Drive _____ ○○○○○
 Etiquette _____ ○○○○○
 Firearms _____ ○○○○○
 Larceny _____ ○○○○○
 Melee _____ ○○○○○
 Performance _____ ○○○○○
 Stealth _____ ○○○○○
 Survival _____ ○○○○○
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Knowledges

Academics _____ ○○○○○
 Computer _____ ○○○○○
 Enigmas _____ ○○○○○
 Investigation _____ ○○○○○
 Law _____ ○○○○○
 Medicine _____ ○○○○○
 Occult _____ ○○○○○
 Rituals _____ ○○○○○
 Science _____ ○○○○○
 Technology _____ ○○○○○
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Advantages

Backgrounds

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Gifts

Misc

Renown

Glory

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

Honor

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

Wisdom

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

Gnosis

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

Willpower

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

Health

Bruised _____ □
 Hurt -1 _____ □
 Injured -1 _____ □
 Wounded -2 _____ □
 Mauled -2 _____ □
 Crippled -5 _____ □
 Incapacitated _____ □

Experience

KINFOLK

A BREED APART

Merits & Flaws

| Merit | Type | Cost | Flaw | Type | Bonus |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Other Traits

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | OOOOO |

Notes

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Fetishes

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Item: _____ | Level: _____ | Gnosis: _____ |
| Power: _____ | | |
| Item: _____ | Level: _____ | Gnosis: _____ |
| Power: _____ | | |
| Item: _____ | Level: _____ | Gnosis: _____ |
| Power: _____ | | |
| Item: _____ | Level: _____ | Gnosis: _____ |
| Power: _____ | | |
| Item: _____ | Level: _____ | Gnosis: _____ |
| Power: _____ | | |
| Item: _____ | Level: _____ | Gnosis: _____ |
| Power: _____ | | |

Rites

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
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| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Combat

| Weapon/Attack | Roll | Diff. | Damage | Range | Rate | Clip |
|---------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Brawling Chart

| Maneuver | Roll | Diff | Damage |
|-------------|-------------|------|----------------|
| Bite* | Dex + Brawl | 5 | Strength + 1/A |
| Body Tackle | Dex + Brawl | 7 | Special/B |
| Grapple | Dex + Brawl | 6 | Strength/B |
| Kick | Dex + Brawl | 7 | Strength + 1/B |
| Punch | Dex + Brawl | 6 | Strength/B |

A=Aggravated Damage B= Bashing Damage * Lupus Breed Only

Armor: _____

KINFOLK

A BREED APART

Born to Run

The Garou are born of two kinds: humans and wolves. These are their Kinfolk — those “of the blood.” These special people — whether of two legs or four — carry in them the hope of the Garou: the promise of future generations. Although Garou are born to Kinfolk, nobody knows they’re different until they undergo their First Change. Until such a blessed (or cursed) time, they are just like their more mundane Kin. Most live as humans, suffering the foibles of humanity, all the while hoping they’re secretly special, that they harbor the wolf within. Even though that wolf will never howl for the majority of Kin, they’ve still got a vital role in the war, aiding the effort from behind the lines.

Stuck in Second Gear

This book gives the Kinfolk the spotlight and shows how they live their lives as adjuncts to the Garou — werewolves who could be their sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, even their parents. It explores the society of Kinfolk, both those “kenning” (in the know) and “callow” (ignorant of the Garou). Storytellers will find advice on running Kinfolk-oriented chronicles, while players can discover special Kinfolk Gifts and fetishes, as well as learn the many differences between Garou and Fera Kin.

Kinfolk: A Breed Apart contains:

- Overview of the Kinfolk, both kenning and callow, including some of the Fellowships founded by Kinfolk to aid the Garou cause — and to protect themselves from their cousins’ Rage.
- Character creation for playing Kinfolk, including new Skills, Backgrounds, Merits and Flaws, as well as special Kin rites, Gifts, and fetishes.
- Guidelines for running Kinfolk chronicles, as well as in-depth information on the Kin-Fetches, the unique spirits used by Garou to watch over their distant cousins and warn the tribes if one of them should undergo the First Change.

