

UMBRA

THE VELVET SHADOW



2014

20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION
WEREWOLF
THE APOCALYPSE

UMBRA

THE VELVET SHADOW



Credits

Authors: N. Conte, Danielle Harper, David Hill, Jeremy Kostiew, Chris Shaffer, Leath Sheales, Filamena Young, Eric Zawadzki

Developer: Stew Wilson

Consulting Developers: Garron Lewis, Ryan Owens

Editor: Danny James Walsh

Creative Director: Rich Thomas

Art Direction and Design: Mike Chaney

Cover Art: Borja Puig Linares

Interior Art: Borja Puig Linares, Andrew Trabbold, Chris Bivins, Brian Leblanc, John Cobb, Jeff "El Jeffe" Holt, Richard Kane Ferguson

Special Thanks

Jeremy "Rorqual are cool" Kostiew for jumping in to bring the Kami back in style.

Ian "Living Archive" Watson for being the world's biggest pack-rat of weird World of Darkness facts.



© 2014 CCP hf. All rights reserved. Reproduction without the written permission of the publisher is expressly forbidden, except for the purposes of reviews, and for blank character sheets, which may be reproduced for personal use only. White Wolf, Vampire, World of Darkness, Vampire the Masquerade, and Mage the Ascension are registered trademarks of CCP hf. All rights reserved. Vampire the Requiem, Werewolf the Apocalypse, Werewolf the Forsaken, Mage the Awakening, Promethean the Created, Changeling the Lost, Hunter the Vigil, Geist the Sin-Eaters, W20, Storyteller System, and Storytelling System are trademarks of CCP hf.

All rights reserved. All characters, names, places and text herein are copyrighted by CCP hf.

CCP North America Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of CCP hf.

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

Check out White Wolf online at <http://www.white-wolf.com/> Check out the Onyx Path at <http://www.theonyxpath.com>

Table of Contents

Introduction **7**

Through the Skin	7
Exploration	8
Senses and the Otherworlds	8
Adaptation	9
Nothing is Real	10
How to Use this Book	10

Chapter One: Penumbra **13**

The Other Side of the Mirror	13
Touching the Spirit World	14
Second Breath	14
Domains of the Triat	16
The Wyld Lands	16
Weaver's Webs	17
Wastelands of the Wyrn	18
Warring Triat	18
Traveling the Spirit World	19
Meaning Made Manifest	21
Genius Loci	22
Blights	22
Storytelling Blights	22
Chimares	22
Storytelling Chimares	23
Epiphs	23

Expressing Concepts	24
What Are They Good For?	24
Inhabitants	24
Glens	24
Places of Learning	25
Places of Denial	25
Hellholes	25
Nuclear Repository Hellholes	25
Urban Hellholes	26
Trods	27
Keys	27
Living History	27
Party of a Lifetime	28
Webs	28
Wage Slaves	28
Unexpected Webs	28
Wyldlings	29
Wylding Spirits	29
Other Layers	29
The Periphery of Thought	29
The Edge of Darkness	30
Faces in the Mirror	31
St. Jacinta's Medical Center	31
Clayton City Park	31
Moors Bottling Company	31
Chemical Waste Plant	31
Festival Market Town	32
Tall Pines Cemetery	32
Oak Ridge Library	33

Alsart Oasis	33
Primrose Orphanage	33
Panacea Pharmaceuticals	33
Office Building	33
Lonely Highway	33
Hashima, The Ghost Island	33
The Ghost Island	33
The Refinery (Blight)	34
Tomorrow Brings Opportunity (Chimare)	34
Wild Reclamation (Epiph)	34
The Woods (Glen)	35

Chapter Two: The Near Umbra **37**

Near and Far	37
Airts	38
Between Realms	38
Moonlit Airts	39
Moon Bridge	39
Moon Path	39
Other Methods	40
Spirit Gates	40
Owl's Wings	40
Spirit Trains	41
Pattern Web	41
Domains and the Dream Zone	42
Dream Zone	42
Malfeas	43

The Abyss	43	The Legendary Realm	66	<i>Bone Gnawers</i>	84
Coming and Going	44	The Kingdoms	66	<i>Children of Gaia</i>	85
Descending the Abyss	44	Wylderness	66	<i>Fianna</i>	85
Climbing	44	The Midnight Land	67	<i>Get of Fenris</i>	85
Flying	44	The Fimbulwinter	67	<i>Glass Walkers</i>	86
The Three Paths	45	The Hungry Dust	67	<i>Red Talons</i>	86
<i>The Iron Path</i>	45	The Great Miasma	68	<i>Shadow Lords</i>	87
<i>The Gold Path</i>	45	Pangaea	68	<i>Silver Fangs</i>	88
<i>The Silver Path</i>	45	Entry and Exit	70	<i>Stargazers</i>	88
Abyssal Denizens	45	The Elder Serpent	70	<i>Uktena</i>	88
Spirits	46	The Graveyard of the Lost	70	<i>Wendigo</i>	89
<i>Nightmaster and</i>		The Savage Tribes	70	The Lost Homelands	89
<i>the Hive of the Jagged Maw</i>	46	<i>The Desert Barbarians</i>	71	<i>Black Spiral Dancers</i>	89
Aetherial Realm	46	<i>The Thulan</i>	71	<i>Bunyip</i>	90
Space Travel	47	<i>The Zarak-Ur</i>	71	<i>Croatan</i>	90
<i>The Moon</i>	47	<i>The Mountain People</i>	71	<i>Silent Striders</i>	90
<i>The Sun</i>	47	Scar	72	The Changing Breeds	91
<i>The Reaches</i>	48	Entry and Exit	72	<i>Corax</i>	91
<i>Other Planets</i>	48	The Gnosis Batteries	72	<i>Nuwisha</i>	91
Going Deeper	48	The Last Junction	73	The Membrane	92
Arcadia Gateway	48	The Barons of Industry	73	<i>Anchorheads</i>	92
Seelie and Unseelie	49	<i>Troubled Economy</i>	74	<i>Crossing the Membrane</i>	92
A Winter's Tale	51	Summer Country	75	<i>Disconnection in</i>	
Atrocity Realm	52	The Isle of Self	75	<i>Anchorheads</i>	93
Horror Show	53	<i>The Well of Life</i>	75	<i>New Anchorheads</i>	93
Breeding Pits	53	Cloudtop High	75	<i>Rite of Anchoring the Divide</i>	93
The Atrocity Library	54	The Garden of Delight	76	<i>Example Anchorheads</i>	94
Battleground	54	Coming and Going	76	<i>Dimensional Portal</i>	94
The Two Roads	55	Now	76	<i>River Rapids</i>	94
The Plain of the Apocalypse	57	Wolfhome	77	<i>Briar Patch</i>	95
CyberRealm	57	The Countryside	78	<i>Other Passageways</i>	96
Entry and Exit	58	The Town	78	The Astral Umbra	96
Spider City	58	<i>Shelters</i>	78	<i>Denizens</i>	96
<i>Uptown</i>	58	<i>The Sewers</i>	79	<i>Conceptual Spirits</i>	96
<i>Downtown</i>	59	<i>The Zoo</i>	79	<i>Mages</i>	97
<i>Old Town</i>	59	The Camps	79	<i>Nightmares</i>	97
<i>The Pit</i>	60	Entry and Exit	79	<i>Vampires</i>	97
<i>The Computer Web</i>	60			<i>Travel within</i>	
Erebus	61	Chapter Three:		<i>the Astral Umbra</i>	97
Arrival	61	Worlds Beyond	81	<i>Venturing into</i>	
A Landscape of Atonement	61			<i>the Astral Umbra</i>	98
Purification	62	Minor Realms	81	<i>Before Harano</i>	98
<i>The Unforgivable</i>	62	Designing Minor Realms	81	<i>Lost Theurge</i>	98
The Changing Breeds	63	Example Minor Realms	82	<i>Astral Assault</i>	99
The Flux Realm	64	<i>Search Engine</i>	82	The Dark Umbra	99
<i>Portraying Flux</i>	64	<i>Synesthesia</i>	82	<i>Denizens</i>	99
The Cocoon	65	The Homelands	83	<i>Spectres</i>	100
The Coil	65	<i>Black Furies</i>	83	<i>Werewolves</i>	100





Introduction

Through the Skin

You're falling asleep. Safe in bed or leaning against the window of a subway train, or propped up in a chair in your living room watching for whatever it is you need to watch. You're just about asleep, when your sense of gravity changes. The place you're in has tilted a bit to the left or right, and your limbs weigh so much that you can't move them. Even your head is too heavy to lift. Meanwhile your body itself, your core, has no weight whatsoever. Your limbs and head drag behind your body as you feel like you're floating up and out of where you were sitting or laying before. You have no control over this floating feeling, and you're now sure you're a foot up in the air looking first at your ceiling, and then as you drift, down at your unconscious body where it rests. It is your body, you're sure of it, but you are no longer in it. The objects around you, your night table or the window curtains, glow strangely and other things have vanished. Your wife laying next to you, or the other passengers on the subway train, all gone. It's just you, floating, surrounded by a luminous landscape. Then you think, 'this is a lie.' All at once, you realize that nothing you're looking at is real and there's a membrane on reality as you knew it, like a bad

matte painting at the back of a stage play. You feel like, if you could just reach out with your arm and push, you could push right through that skin and go... you don't know where.

Which is when you wake up.

And that's the closest most people will ever get to seeing the world beyond our world. We call it an out-of-body experience, or a sleep paralysis, or *kanashibari* – depending on who you ask and when. In the World of Darkness, this feeling isn't a confusion of a sleeping mind. In fact, this is a brief glimpse of truth just past our reality. Our world is not the only world, and that otherworld is attached to ours in a way that is perceivable and we can transgress if we are sensitive enough and have the ability to do so.

The Garou call it the Umbra. And this world, or worlds, just beyond our own is the subject of this book.

For the werewolf, their childhood is full of sleep paralysis and brief encounters with the world beyond. Helpless glimpses through the skin of reality. From nightmares to daydreams to out of body experiences, the Umbra haunts many young Garou-to-be. Is it any wonder, then, when the First Change comes, the werewolf become nearly obsessed with discovering, exploring, and pretending to master the Umbra? The first time a

Garou crosses over it's like the fulfillment of a promise made to them all through their childhood, and the thrill of that promise fulfilled never really fades.

Exploration

Traditionally and in many cases, **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** is horror that is invasive. Something else — many alien things — have crept into our world. This horror has infected not just our lives, but the characters'. We play flesh and blood people who have, in some way, been infested with otherness, the wolf and the spirit world, and all of the strange outsider culture that comes along with. We, as our characters, dread turning that familiar corner to the butcher shop down the street. Not because we know what's there, but because this time we might find something there that isn't supposed to be there. And the characters have to survive the encounter with it, yet remain in the real world as we understand it. As we know the world to be, our Werewolf characters must struggle against forces from outside intent on coming in and changing everything we care about. They infect, and they change everything for the worse. This invasion is unwelcome and unnatural and this is what, in many ways, the Werewolf character struggles with.

But it doesn't always have to be like this for a Werewolf chronicle. In the Umbra, the opposite is true. The characters are the invaders who only half belong in a world of fluid reflections like quicksilver and liquid mirrors. These are not exclusively stories of invasive horror. Instead, our characters have ventured outside the world as they understand it to explore. Maybe they go unwillingly, or without a full understanding of where they are going. That doesn't matter, because they will discover the impossible in the Umbra. Possibility is the order of the day and chaos becomes a sort of order. It is the flesh of the character that becomes unnatural, instead of the wolf, and that flesh is a burden. Perhaps if the wolf could simply shed her skin out here, in the deep, and embrace the illogical, impossible otherness of the Umbra, she would be free and happy. She would be freed of the shackles of knowledge and simply know. She would be free of consciousness and personality and simply be. Or better, she would lose all concept of self and simply become a part of the universe at large.

And rarely, that may be the end result of a long story in the Umbra. The characters seek to explore and understand and know, and as they do, they realize the non-sense of the Umbra is the only kind of sense worth having. It is addictive, being unreal in an unreal place, and maybe this is why humans who go across the gauntlet, in whatever manner they manage it, rarely ever

come back. The Umbra is a place of fright and potential psychological damage, but at least that is natural to it. In this way, it is almost a place of peace compared to the reality our characters are born into.

Senses and the Otherworlds

As the Storyteller, discovery of otherworlds and spirit beings begins with you. To start off you have to describe the Umbra as what it appears to be and how it feels.

Though it doesn't and shouldn't end with you, once you've set the tone, you must insist on players getting involved in bringing the strange to life.

For now, as the Storyteller, you must concentrate on senses. All of them. And perhaps more of them than the standard five you're used to from grade school. The Umbra must be a sensual experience, with stimulation coming at the characters from all corners and exciting all of their senses at once. The old rule for writing, or getting started as a writer is that every page of your story should have at least one clear sensory detail. This isn't bad advice for the Storyteller either, though you must adjust the pacing. Where can you, as the Storyteller, add a touch of sense to every interaction on your end. From Storyteller characters speaking to answering questions the players might ask you, can you include a sensory detail to ground the unreal in the player's minds and bring the Umbra to throbbing, slick, singing life? You just have to dive head first into it.

This takes practice, but as with many Storytelling techniques you can use shortcuts to assist you in being more sensual at the table. Create yourself a cheat sheet of colors, smells, textures, and adjectives that describe these things. If you bring your characters to a vivid place like an Umbral river of blood, to say that the blood smells coppery says something very different than saying that the river smells acrid or metallic and sweet. But having some lists at hand with evocative words that immediately stimulate your imagination will surely help you stimulate your players. Once you have these lists, the best place to start is to look at your own language and habits. The next time you start to say 'you see...' to tell the players what is around their characters, replace 'see' with another sense. You smell. You hear. You feel. You swallow.

You can use these sensory details to link important story hooks in your players minds as well. If you have introduced them to a very specific and important river goddess, and talk about the smell of orchids on fresh water every time she appears, add her scent to an

otherwise unrelated scene, and implicate her. 'You see nothing but dead werewolves in the spiritual reflection of this cistern, dozens, but the rancid smell of curdled blood blends with fresh water and fresher flowers. Familiar flowers.' Or perhaps clue them into a major problem when the river goddess appears, but they smell nothing. Or something off. The Umbra, for all its chaos, makes its own sort of sense, and violations of these rules may indicate to the characters something is wrong.

There's more than sight and smell to work from as well. Consider how your character would feel as their sense of time is confused by the fluid nature of the unreal. What do they do when one of the characters perceives herself as moving just a few seconds faster than the others in the time stream. What about their kinetic sense? Most people experience a pit-of-the-stomach sort of fear that comes along with dizzy unstable movement that you can surely take advantage of from time to time.

Just keep a sense of balance in mind. When you have inflicted horrible, stomach churning sensory details to your players for most of a session, break it up the next session with moments of purifying peace. If you want a sweet cake, you add some salt to make the sweet stand out. It's true in cake, and it's true in your Storytelling of the Umbra.

Adaptation

Exploration of the Umbra isn't for the players alone and discovery is something the Storyteller may experience as well as they take their characters to the realms beyond. Some of the best moments that can come out of a roleplaying game start out with a player suggesting something the Storyteller hadn't planned for and the excitement of player and Storyteller alike working out 'what happens next' as a result. Because so very little is concrete and real in the Umbra, a thing that is true right now may not be true a breath later. In this way the Storyteller has a great deal of leverage when it comes to letting the players play in their sandbox.

It starts out simply enough. After you've filled your players minds with sights and sounds and smells that are evocative, you ask them a leading question. "What type of spirit do you see?" "Why is the bridge broken?" "Who came here just before you, and how do you know?" Leading questions like these take some of the creative load off you as the Storyteller and help your players get used to the idea of occasionally taking reins over what could be. Since you're in the



Umbra, even a recalcitrant player who wants no agency at all may be tempted if she can't give a wrong answer. Often, you'll be surprised with what your players come up with. That's the idea. In this way stories in the Umbra are exploratory for you as well. You challenge your Storytelling prowess against your players' creativity to tell a story of what-if together. Memorizing spirit stats and weapon rule page numbers is all well and good, and has its place, but absolute knowledge of 'what is true in your campaign' is as fluid for you as the Storyteller as it is for the characters within your story. Anything is possible.

Sometimes, especially if you can incorporate leading questions into your game style, your players will suggest without being asked. Say yes more often and chase them down the rabbit hole. Let your players tell you the dream she has while in the Astral, and instead of shrugging it off, use it. Wring it free of every drop of story fodder you can and encourage her to bring you free story ideas again next time.

This may be a part of your play style already, and your players may already love taking the reins from time to time. In that case, how much more experimental can you get? Can you draw players into acting as additional Storyteller characters for a particularly powerful moment in only one character's story? Is this a scene that could benefit from taking the group to a particularly ethereal location in your area and playing there, or even playing the scene out as a live action scenario? What about a scene in the deepest Umbra where nothing quite makes sense, played out by having the players switch characters with each other. No change in who the character is, just who is playing them and the fallout next session when someone did something unforgivable or unexpected or out of their normal behavior. In the Umbra, you can get away with a lot, so this is the time to get experimental. This is the time to try things that would never work as a full time technique with your group.

Nothing is Real

The Umbra moves, grows, shrinks and changes with a mercurial proficiency we can only pretend to understand. Outside of the Umbra, the characters understand what is real and what isn't real. As a Storyteller and as players, you can take this to a meta level of understanding. Just because something exists in this book does not mean it all must necessarily exist in your Umbra. Much of this book focuses on strange and unique experiences meant to stand out as examples of the bizarre nature of the worlds beyond. That's a great deal of uniqueness,

and it might clutter your game's cosmology. When in doubt, rely on flexibility and consistency. Anything in this book can be true, but that doesn't mean all things in this book are true at the same time. Or in the same game. So long as all of your players are on board with the same understanding and you remain consistent about what they understand out of character and what you have decided to change from the book in character, pick and choose as you desire. Anything is possible, and truth is what you make it.

How to Use this Book

W20: Umbra is a book that empowers Storytellers and players alike, giving them the tools they need to look at the spirit world with fresh, new eyes. This book lets the players explore the mystery of the unknowable with confidence as it provides the Storytellers and players the tools needed to understand how the Umbra is constructed. In character, the Umbra is a place that is impossible to know and fully comprehend to the human mind, but that doesn't mean it has to be chaos and frustration for your gaming group.

Chapter One: Penumbra covers the taste, smell, and feel of the Penumbra for what it is. See it for what it appears to be. This chapter will take you through the process of crossing over in detail as well as give you usable, story driven examples of places in the real world affected by the spirits in the Penumbra and how places in the Penumbra are affected by the events in those real world places.

Chapter Two: The Near Umbra explores the Realms in great detail, showing how, or if, they interact with one another, and why a werewolf would visit them. Further, this chapter explains what the Near Umbra is like between the Realms and what it looks and feels like to be in this vast nothing between realities. What does it feel like to move between Realms and how does it work? What is a Moonlit Airt, and what exciting and terrible things can happen when traveling along it?

Chapter Three: Worlds Beyond takes a look at plot hooks and story fodder that will take you through the Realms and into the Anchorheads. What is the Membrane and what happens when you cross it? What is Disconnection and how do werewolves protect themselves against it? Further, this chapter explores the Deep Umbra – the vast nothing, full of possibility. A place where outsider horror and two fisted pulp science fiction are separated only by chance, what can the characters experience here?

Chapter Four: Spirits explores the cosmology and metaphysics of spirits. Here you'll get details on how spirits operate, how they 'think' or if they even do. Players and Storytellers alike can draw both story ideas and roleplaying guidelines for dealing with spirits. In addition, find well over fifty new spirits for use in your chronicle. Strange, unique spirits updated to bring new culture to the Umbra and give you ideas of just how much our world affects the next.

Chapter Five: The Chosen asks: who are the real Chosen of Gaia? Is it her warriors, or is it the Kami? Spirit-things created by Gaia to a specific task and filled with her blessings, what are these rare and mysterious entities, and how can you use them in your game? What is their history, and are they really Gaia's fomori? It also includes several example Kami to pick and choose from to bring directly into your game.





#

Chapter One: Penumbra

Joseph shivered as the wave of cold washed over him. It turned to hot and his muscles tightened. His heart pounded. The world itself shimmered as though caught in rising ribbons of heat. Then all color and sound seemed to drain out of the world. He fought the urge to panic as something unseen pressed in on him.

All at once he passed through and felt like he dropped to the ground, though he'd never left it. The weight vanished and he could breathe again. Too quickly. Breath after breath, he felt like he was hyperventilating. "Can't breathe," he choked.

Amari looked back at her cub and grinned. "Easy. You're just taking your Second Breath, is all. You tasted one when you were born. But that was only half the story. Nice and slow. Deep breaths. Feel that? Feel how clean it is? This is your home, Joseph Star-Treader. This is where you belong."

He listened to her words, focused on the sound, on her eyes. Joseph's breath slowed down. His skin tingled with sensations he couldn't understand. The world around him was different. It looked like the one he'd left, but the trees weren't in the right places. And the air, it smelled different, tasted different. Lighter somehow.

"Here, we don't have decades of pollution filling the air. This is the world as Gaia remembers it. Go ahead. Try it out as the wolf."

Joseph nodded and shifted into his white-pawed Lupus form, muscles knotting and warping, bones reconfiguring themselves, his perspective dropping lower to the ground and yet opening up. He reeled from the impact. He could almost taste the sticky sap oozing from the Penumbra trees. He heard it all, each individual leaf rustling in the wind. His paws sank into the warm, moist grass and waves of scent wafted up to his nose, of soil and fresh grass, flowers, animal spirits, all drifting on the wind. He looked up at Amari with his green eyes full of wonder.

She grinned. "Welcome home."

The Other Side of the Mirror

Just on the other side of perception lies the Penumbra. For Garou, it is a missing piece of the world. They keenly feel its absence while they walk in the land of flesh and blood. Gaia's children yearn for the spirit world. It is their birthright, one half of their home separated from them by a barrier of spiritual calcification: the Gauntlet. Erected in prehistory by a cosmic force of stasis, the Gauntlet divides the realms of flesh and spirit and would forever keep them apart. The Garou aren't so easily dissuaded.

By their dual heritage of flesh and spirit, werewolves walk in both worlds. The Gauntlet makes transition between realms difficult but not impossible. In places where it is thin, such as the rare unspoiled wilds and caerns home to Garou septs, packs cross over frequently. The process is much more taxing in the hearts of smog-choked cities and industrial centers where the Gauntlet is strong. Weaver-spirits cast their webs over the wall between worlds and strengthen the Gauntlet, threatening to completely seal away some regions.

Garou and other Gaian creatures fight this calcification tooth and claw. As the Apocalypse draws nigh, perhaps only by unifying both sides of the world can they prevent the destruction of reality. Certainly the warriors of Gaia grow weaker when cut off from their spiritual halves, just as the world itself does.

Battles for Umbral harmony begin in the Penumbra. It is the closest Umbral realm, a spiritual reflection of the physical world that humans know. All throughout the world it mirrors the material realm with ephemeral reflections. Here, in the Penumbra, things come alive in a way that mundane senses cannot fully appreciate. Creatures of flesh and spirit such as the Garou feel the pulse of the world. It's like coming home again. Being born again. Every breath is like the first breath of fresh air to a person who has only known the polluted air of a big city. But before a werewolf can revel in the feeling, she must push through the Gauntlet.

Touching the Spirit World

Crossing the Gauntlet into the Penumbra is an ability inherent to all werewolves and most Fera. Many younger Garou go unaware of this ability until taught by a spirit or an older werewolf. Once they are aware of it the act becomes second nature just as much as changing forms, if not always so easily done. Garou spiritualists describe the transition as something like ceasing to move forward in one world and moving laterally into another; accordingly, they call the process "stepping sideways" into the Umbra.

Before she can attempt to step sideways a werewolf must meditate upon a reflective surface. Still pools of water, mirrors, windows, all serve as focuses for the werewolf's will to reach the other world. Her Gnosis reaches for the Penumbra; this stirring is much like reaching out to part a veil. Many describe the feeling as similar to pushing through a thin sheet of water that leaves one's skin dry but tingling with the sensation of goosebumps. Others say it feels like pressing bodily into a layer of gelatinous liquid. In both cases the Gauntlet can seem warm (in places of spiritual strength) or cold (where the Gauntlet is thick and oppressive). Some werewolves ascribe a sticky feeling to it like plunging through a great spider web, especially in cities and places of spiritual sterility.

At the moment of transition, a werewolf's pulse quickens. The hair on her neck stands up (or the fur on her whole body if she's in Lupus form). Her mind races with a feeling like sudden realization. It is a transformation of flesh into spirit, matter into ephemera. With a final surge she is through. The Gauntlet releases her and she stands fully in the Penumbra. That is, if she successfully stepped sideways. It's not always quite so simple.

On rare occasions a werewolf gets stuck in the Gauntlet. This occurs more frequently in places where the Gauntlet is thickest, and it's one of the most horrifying feelings a werewolf can experience. For several hours, she feels what the Wyrms must have felt over eons, bound in the Weaver's web, helpless and pulled between worlds, residing in neither. No matter how hard the werewolf thrashes she cannot tear free of the webs. The harder she pulls, the more they restrict her. Slashing claws avail her not against these spiritual bindings. For the duration she is prey, unless another werewolf can pull her free. Those who have experienced this horrifying state recount the visions of madness that assault their minds: Earth roiling in body and spirit, soul-crushing cataclysms, pain and Rage and hatred directed at all reality. A microcosm of the Wyrms' madness afflicts the trapped werewolf and forever after she understands the enormity of their enemy's malaise. To imagine Gaia so ensnared just before the Wyrms devour Her or the Weaver chokes the life from Her is enough to incite any Garou to frenzy.

Opposite that feeling of ensnarement is the affirmation a werewolf feels upon reaching the Penumbra. As she settles into ephemeral form, the traveler feels like she is stretching stiff muscles. The world is somehow more real. Scents are sharper, colors are more vibrant. Away from the bustle of Man's cities the air is clear and fresh, the grass underfoot is warm and spongy, brimming with green vitality. Immersion in the Penumbra heightens every sensation: the thump of paws on dirt, the touch of another's skin, the warmth of the sun on one's back. To Garou, the oppressive dullness of human senses fall away when they change form. In the Penumbra her senses come alive yet again, and even the Homid form can see and hear more sharply, taste the changes on the wind.

Sometimes the added awareness brings into sharp focus the corruption eating at the heart of reality. Especially in cities, where infrastructure and government rot from within, the Penumbra reflects that spreading sickness. Wise Garou treasure what few havens they have left in the World of Darkness.

Second Breath

A werewolf's first emergence into the Penumbra marks an important part of the Rite of Passage. Some mystics call this "the Second Breath," because a werewolf has not truly taken her second breath of the world until she has also tasted

the air across the Gauntlet. As creatures of both flesh and spirit, it is their very birthright to walk in both worlds. Each of the tribes holds their own special rites, many of them involving a hunt, for when cubs take their Second Breath these mark a day as momentous as the First Change itself.

Black Furies take their cubs to places in Penumbra corresponding to Luna, a powerful female symbol. In moonlit glades they recount stories of Furies past and those who earned Luna's favor through mighty deeds. Challenges of physical and mental strength follow, teaching young Furies what it means to be a true warrior woman.

Bone Gnawers favor the city and reflections of rundown places, from ill-kept parks to camp sites trashed by drunken revels. They teach their cubs to seek the beauty in these places, the hope that ever remains no matter how thick the cloud of filth. They listen to the voices in these places and hear what others miss out of disdainful ignorance.

Children of Gaia seek out tranquil glades, often in the presence of caerns or those places humanity has touched that yet retain some spiritual purity. Theirs are meditative gatherings, where thoughtful discourse and tales of Gaia's beauty tell of the reward that awaits Her children if they prevail.

Fianna engage in passionate hunts mixed with celebratory dances round the fire in some of the loudest Second Breath rites. They sing and howl their defiant joy that all spirits of the Triat may hear it, for each Garou born and each Second Breath is a spit in the eye of Apocalypse. They teach their cubs to embrace the vigor of life as a Garou.

Get of Fenris have perhaps the most brutal of Second Breath rites. Much like their initiation rites, cubs are taken through the Gauntlet to hunt dangerous prey. Get Theurges often bind vicious Wyld-spirits into such tasks and throw themselves into hunting the chosen prey. Sometimes the Get raid bane nests instead, earning cubs their first spiritual scars.

Glass Walkers lead rites not simply into the city, but into the wilds as well. Their cubs are taught that just as a werewolf walks in two worlds, so too does their responsibility include the wild and the urban. They learn to hunt in urban environs as well as the advantages that mastery of a spiritual cityscape can bring.

Red Talons bring their cubs deep into the spirit wilds. Packs may take only wolf form and communicate only as wolves do, for even relying on the High Tongue can be a weakness. From there begins a long hunt into a Penumbra city in order to destroy a spiritual reflection of some important human



establishment. Their favored targets are City Halls, factories, even schools poised to raise a new generation of human spawn.

Shadow Lords impress upon their cubs the great responsibility to rule the Garou Nation that only they are fit to bear. Their Second Breath is a step on the road to leadership, filled with stern lessons and hunts designed to put new cliath in their place — and prepare them to take the place of their elders when the time comes.

Silent Striders take long journeys into the spirit world, running until cubs are exhausted. They then take shelter for the night wherever they end up and share stories of the things they have learned on their travels. Striders are taught that in the face of Apocalypse, the Garou may lose their homes but find new purpose in their freedom.

Silver Fangs favor rites that take them through famous caerns and demonstrate the great history of the tribe. Theirs are rites of purity, baptizing cubs in purified lakes and reminding them of the turmoil afflicting the Penumbra. It is the Silver Fangs who must bring order to the realm, which they do by the superiority carried within their blood.

Stargazers live up to their tribal name. They take their Second Breath to lofty reaches where they can stare and howl into a starry night sky. Spirits of the heavens visit these highly mystical rites and pass on secrets, magic, or simply a perspective as old as the world itself. Every Stargazer comes away from the Breath rites a little wiser and a lot more contemplative.

Uktena also take part in highly mystical rites, seeking wisdom in the footsteps of their ancestors. More than any other tribe, they teach their cubs of the mythic nature of the spirit world. They look for signs and meanings in the very fabric of the Penumbra itself, and young Uktena become some of the finest interpreters of spirit omens in the Nation.

Wendigo cubs take their Second Breath warmed by the blood of prey that represents their many enemies. Favored prey include Banes and spirits revered by the European tribes. If they can take their Penumbral journey through places as bitter cold as their hatred of corruption, so much the better.

Domains of the Triat

The world just across the Gauntlet is one markedly different from the mortal world. For Homid Garou, used to relying on sight more than their other senses, it is especially strange. The Penumbra is a vision of a world gone by, where the cosmic forces of the Triat manifest in tangible forms.

Anyone aware of the Triat sees their influence in the world. The Weaver paradoxically fuels technological advancement and societal stagnation. Her influence manifests in the greatest cities in the world. So does the Wyrms, in the corruption that devours the hearts of cities. The chemicals dumped into the environment and the urban decay that

turns people on each other both feed the misery of Gaia. The Wyld grows around the edges, thrusting up through the cracks in a dying world like weeds in a rundown sidewalk.

In the Penumbra, these signs are more than mere hints. Symbolism takes on life of its own. Garou can witness the forces that shape the world in their purest state. Some Garou theorize that the Penumbra is the world as Gaia sees it, and so it is idealized — at least in those few places where the Apocalypse war has not shattered the balance entirely. Theurges take this belief a step further. The Penumbra and the physical merged is the way Gaia once was, before the Gauntlet — and to heal the world, the barrier must come down.

As creatures of Gaia with keen senses and powerful ties to the world, shapeshifters are more aware of the Triat at work within the Penumbra than any other living things. They feel the sensations of the world — its pain, its joy, its need for restoration. Understanding these domains is the first step in healing them.

The Wyld Lands

Humanity no longer feels the Wyld's presence as it once did, but in the Penumbra the Wyld remains strong. Wilderness areas are alive and green with the raw vitality of nature. Vast areas of forest still stand where long ago their material counterparts fell to make room for lonely, ill-kept highways. The woods grow thick and retain a primal vigor reminiscent of the prehistory known to man. During the day, sunlight is omnipresent in a vibrant blue sky, though no sun itself is visible. Warmth permeates the world. Sunbeams still filter through tangled nets of branches and leaves. Tiny winged spirits flit amid the floating banks of pollen just outside the sunbeams. The ground is warm and soft, a maze of roots and burrows dug by spirits, ever inviting to the touch of a wolf's paw. Garou with high spiritual awareness even say that the wolf's ear can hear a pulse rumbling deep within the earth.

Lupine senses find a vast wealth of information in these regions. The scents of a Penumbral forest tell werewolves of things hidden to sight. The pungent aroma of moist dirt, trees in full bloom, and waters rushing through twisting riverbeds all drift from miles away to reach the wolf's nose. With no human-created pollutants in the air to mask them, these things reach their full potency in Gaia's presence. Spirits have their own scents, much like animals, and their unique odors carry hints as to the spirit's nature. Two dog-spirits might smell like dogs, but one whose territory corresponds to garbage-strewn alleys full of strays in the material world might stink of wet dog and rotting food. One whose territory includes the reflection of an old dog breeder's building smells faintly of shampoos or freshly-washed fur.

The Penumbra is a feast for the eyes as well. Colors are more vibrant, as though viewed through a children's drawing:

greens are impossibly deep and alive, earthen browns so fertile that a blind werewolf could see the saplings growing within, yellows and blues and reds of flowers taking shapes not seen in the material world. It's akin to seeing with a child's eyes again, or perhaps like the traveler had only seen the world through a dirty window and now sees it clearly for the first time. The same dog-spirits from earlier even take on different appearances. One takes the form of an immaculately groomed specimen, an amalgam of expensive dog breeds, while the other is ratty, and missing patches of fur.

Whispers and voices surround the Penumbra travelers: wind-spirits whistling through the trees, spirits of animals and elements mingling in the waters and along the banks. The sound of distant rushing streams and rivers drifts on the wind. Every twig snapped underfoot is a crack like thunder.

At night the Penumbra comes alive with new sounds and sights. The sky is an impossibly deep blue, so intense that to stare at it for long is to feel as though one is plunging into an ocean of stars and ethereal pathways. The stars are always visible and bright enough to read by, even though they share the sky with Luna. Many exist in constellations unknown to mortal astronomers, reflections of those gone by or invisible in smog-choked skies. On the clearest nights in spring and summer, Penumbra stargazers can even see distant realms of the Near Umbra, at once beyond the limits of perception and yet just out of arm's reach. Lunar coronas sometimes reflect hints of Moonlit Airs winding throughout the Umbra. Airs are spiritual paths, often trails left by the passage of important spirits, lingering in the Penumbra like ethereal contrails. Werewolf travelers can follow these airs, although spirits are unpredictable and it is easy to lose the path.

Spirits of nature in all its forms abound in the Penumbra. Their shapes are myriad, but they are the most common spirit allies for Garou, serving as pack totems, guides and information brokers. Stepping sideways at a popular lake resort immediately trades the bustle of human activity for spiritual: steadfast elder spirits of the elements rule over kingdoms of plants and animals. Waves crash in the shape of serpents and steeds and human vessels, colliding and melting away and reforming just as quickly. Above it all soar bird-spirits whose wings hiss with the ebb and flow of waves. The Penumbra world is brimming with life-force, the buzz and beat and scents of a world where life is the most powerful force of all.

Larger things stalk the Penumbra wilds, spirits of bygone beasts and the creatures still roaming the world. They serve as predator and prey, messengers and agents of the Wyld itself. Garou communicate with these spirits in order to learn Gifts or gain allies in the fight against the Wyrms, but to do so is fraught with risks. The wildest of spirits are a danger even to Gaian forces, born of the unthinking maelstrom of creation that is the Wyld.

Weaver's Webs

In contrast to the sheer vigor of the wilds, the Weaver's domain is cold, sterile at its worst and unnaturally ordered even at its best. Cities are the greatest examples of the Weaver's work. Penumbra cities look like haunted ghost towns, even the few that are spiritually healthy — a rarity in the modern world. Few humans cast reflections and nature-spirits are rare. The air is usually free of smog and the noise pollution of cities, but still not clear. Webs, countless silver threads, fill the urban landscape. They course along lines of electricity, following the paths of traffic lights in the material world. Heavily-trafficked areas like the busiest, gridlocked roads have reflections covered in webs that crackle with the electric fury of urban madness. Spirits find themselves caught up in these webs just as people across the Gauntlet rushing to or from work are caught in traffic jams. Webs cover buildings, and sag in the gaps that cross streets. Everywhere, spider-shaped Weaver-spirits cast their threads, or prey upon the Wyld-spirits caught in their webs.

Most buildings lack the spiritual significance to cast a direct reflection in the Penumbra. All of these features have but a weak spirit, draped in the iridescent trceries of the Pattern Web. A hospital or office building follows the same general layout as it does in the physical world, but without the defining features that differentiates this one from any other. The spiritual substance of each building is reinforced with the Weaver's webs, adding structure to an otherwise unsubstantial place. Cell phones, computers, traffic lights, and streetlights all have their own distinct reflections as spirits of data and transmissions flit through the air. Streetlights too have an Umbral reflection — their unique pattern of light and shadow is distinct in every city, be it London's sodium light, or the twinkling lights of New York City that look like a second star-scape.

While car-spirits exist in the umbra, the air is much cleaner, a change any werewolf immediately notices. Pollutants do not normally cross the Gauntlet, although an excess in the physical world can poison the spirit shadow of an area and draw the attention of Banes. In these places the Penumbra is sick, choked off from life-giving Wyld energies and rotting from within like parasites gnawing at the marrow of bleached-white bones.

The oldest vehicles, like beat-up city buses driven long past their prime, and the most important, such as first-class airliners carrying the business world's elite, cast shadows in the Penumbra. The plane reflections rumble in the distant sky as they fly overhead, sometimes soaring through starry nights and the misty lowest riches of Near Umbral realms. Passengers in the real world cannot see the strange spiritual worlds whose gossamer threads they part in their flight, but

the dreams of sleepers and the thoughts of those staring out the window drift along bizarre paths.

Ambient lighting and the spiritual reflections of lit windows can only make up so much for the lack of a city's light pollution. Fortunately, the Garou have their other senses to rely upon when the Penumbral sun falls. The stars seem dimmer here than in the wilds, perhaps a reflection of the gases cast upward by cities. Alleys and unlit streets plunge into deep shadow under nightfall. Even the sharpest eyes barely catch the glint of starlight reflecting off the multifaceted eyes of Weaver-spirits, or small things wriggling in the shadows.

Penumbral cities often reek of a chemical smell. It's not like any chemical the Garou know from the human world, but an eye-watering acidity crossed with the smell of oil. The effect is worst in areas of complete Weaver dominance, such as the coldest, most sterile labs. Lupine senses naturally recoil from such unnatural scents, and in the most extreme cases many werewolves adopt the Homid form lest they choke on their own vomit.

Industrial noises near and far fill the air: The clang of machinery. The electric screeches of communicating Weaver-spirits. Endlessly grinding gears pulled by tireless gleaming spiders. Everywhere she looks, a traveler sees legions of insectile spirits like silkworms, silver-plated cockroaches and clouds of flying insects work tirelessly at refining the Penumbral city. The electronic buzz of their wings is the drone of signal interference. Their chittering sounds like a static shriek and wears at the patience of any shapeshifter that listens for too long. They tear down and rebuild just as fast as the material counterpart of the city does, or perhaps faster, for the spirits never sleep. In its own way, the city's shadow grows as much as do the wilds. Its forms are of cold, hard edges and impossibly clean surfaces. Order is everything. The Weaver has no room for imperfections like the asymmetrical beauty of a flower or the simple patterns of a faerie ring. Weaver-spirits remove such things to replace them with perfectly ordered facsimiles, or to pave the way for advancement. Progress is their overriding goal, and neither the past nor the present will stand in the way of the future.

Wastelands of the Wyrms

Far too much of the Umbra suffers from the Wyrms' touch. The greatest of its cruelty is reserved for the Penumbra, the soul of the world, though its attacks come on both sides of the Gauntlet. In the mortal world, toxic waste plants and slaughterhouses attract Banes. Their spiritual excrescence further poisons the area. Sickness of body and mind soon follows, afflicting humans and animals. Taint spreads like a plague and manifests in the lives of the diseased.

In Wyld areas, Wym-taint twists nature's merciless fury into monstrous, deadly forms. Gnarled branches covered in thorns whip suddenly at passersby, drinking deep of their

blood and filling the wound with numbing poison. The marshy ground smells of putrefaction, occasionally vomiting up clouds of noxious gas. In these places, the bones of indescribable dead things litter the area, sinking into the mire only to rise again somewhere else. Hissing gasses, suppurating pools of filth and creaking branches that groan like the hungry dead fill the area. Even the trees themselves become monstrous in some way, with leering faces or patterns resembling the Black Spiral covering their bark.

The Wym's favorite targets are those pure places that dwindle in number by the day. Garou defend pristine glades, holy sites and caerns fiercely, but also suffer their loss the most. Banes swarm to such areas and make their nests, vomiting forth taint until a whole area is choked of life because of it. In the material realm, these areas become blighted farmlands, rundown "projects" and sites home to the worst crimes against humanity: murder, slavery, and human trafficking.

Cities suffer worse than the wilds in many ways. Their Penumbral reflections embody all the worst aspects of humanity. Smog chokes the sky of light and casts a sickly shadow over everything. The reek of toxic byproducts turns the stomach and leaves a film of grime over everything. Buildings loom and twist over the streets, casting a sense of oppression on those caught in their deep shadows. Shapes dart by in darkened windows, too quick to give anything but impressions of knotted bone, dimly glowing eyes and dripping maws. Wym-beasts hunt and torture Gaian spirits in these places, reserving special agonies for Wyld-spirits. Being caught in the web of some Wym-tainted Weaver-spirit is a ticket to slow, agonizing death, of venom devouring her insides while her outsides are slowly calcified.

Warring Triat

Once, the Wyld created, the Weaver shaped and the Wym served balance by destroying so that its siblings might create anew. Now the forces of the Triat war ceaselessly in all levels of the universe, from the high to the low. Balance is lost. The Wyld seeks to flood the world with the stuff of raw creation, heedless of form or restraint. The Weaver wishes to bind all in its webs and bring gleaming stasis to every realm.

Beneath their work lurks the Wym. It cannot create anything, nor can it cleanse the world as it once did. The Wym can only corrupt the creations of others until they fray into nothingness. It does not kill, it *poisons*. It does not leave room for new growth, it festers in the wounds and prevents healing. No longer willing or able to serve its purpose, the Wym now exists only as a taint in the heart of reality itself.

The Penumbra shows the scars of these warring forces as readily as does the mortal world. On their own, Wyld and Weaver might reach a stalemate. Their opposing actions set

chaos against order in an endless struggle. Yet the Wyrms are there, and their presence undermines even that tenuous balance that once it served. In the shadow of the human world, Wyrmtaint in the Weaver's domains fuels urban decay and squalor. Its poison drips from the webs, and now the Wyrms' forces — like the corporate hydra Pentex — infest all of humanity. The so-called "first world" (a term at which many Garou bristle) is a bastion of deceit and suffering. Humanity is spread so far even the Garou cannot hope to cut away the spiritual cancer that eats at the heart of it all. Every city, every empire rots from within and eventually collapses into sickness and sin.

Where the Wyld meets the Wyrms, the results are just as disastrous. Companies dump chemical waste into lakes and oceans, or bury it outside city limits, poisoning huge tracts of the ecosystem. Engineered diseases wither trees, kill pollinating flowers and the animals that depend on them. This in turn causes poverty and widespread hunger among humans, reinforcing the cycle of decay.

Such tragedy also afflicts the Penumbra. The spiritual health of a region is tied to its physical health. Spirits of nature and life find it difficult to prosper in places where people are starving and beaten down. Reflections of cities lost to crime and squalor become places where Banes flourish, stalking Weaver-spirits in their webs, Wyld-spirits in their dens, and covering whole areas with their filth. The loss of a two-hundred year old tree in the physical world is unfortunate, but the loss of its spiritual counterpart — which might have stood ten times as long — is damage that can never be undone. Worse still is the metaphysical salting of the earth: where the land itself becomes so tainted that all that grows there is of the Wyrms, and its poison flows like blood in the veins of the world.

The damage and taint is spread so far that the problem seems overwhelming, and makes even Penumbra travel highly dangerous. Yet travel they must, for the battle there is equally important as the war in the mortal world. They seek allies, distant battlegrounds and resources throughout the spirit world. Fortunately, Gaia equipped her children to brave any storm.

Traveling the Spirit World

The Penumbra is not a perfect mirror, but travelers can reasonably expect to travel as they do in the material world. Wolves and humans do not fly without the aid of spirits. If a werewolf travels close to the physical world, distances and environments seem relatively the same. If she steps sideways in a desert, the Penumbra landscape will also be a desert. If afterward she walks a few miles and is still in desert when she steps back across the Gauntlet, she will have gone about as far as she would have in the material world.

Time likewise passes normally. Night falls on the physical and ephemeral worlds alike. The sun rises in both realms

at once. In the Penumbra, the sun is only visible in the sky during times of special significance. Weather follows a similar pattern, influenced by the spiritual state of an area. In places of tranquility, the weather is serene as a breezy summer morning. In places of great turmoil, weather crashes in tidal waves, earth-splitting thunderclaps and furious bolts that scar the sky.

While the general environment of the Penumbra corresponds to that of its counterpart, the shape of the land may differ greatly. A desert in the material realm is a desert in the Penumbra. Yet as a realm of mythic resonance, what the Penumbra holds may be a vision out of a different time. A cactus whose milk sustained many dying travelers and served as an important landmark will still stand even centuries after its physical body perished. Likewise, oases that have vanished in the physical world will remain verdant fonts of life in the Penumbra. Even the shape of dunes and the course of rivers will vary, reflecting their state as Stone Age civilizations might have known them.

All the Penumbra world follows this same rule as a reflection of things past and things yet to be, things as they *should* be. Sometimes, the entire region is long gone in the physical realm, but still alive and well in the Penumbra. This occurs with alarming frequency in the modern age. Clear-cutting and human-caused fires can wipe out rainforests that have stood for thousands of years, but the Penumbra reflection of those forests survives afterward. It's even possible that the material forests could return in time, as long as their spirits survive. The reverse is sadly untrue: living things cannot survive the destruction of their spiritual halves. For this reason the Wyrms' forces target the spirits of areas they conquer even more voraciously than they do the physical side. When a Pentex subsidiary's agents clear-cut a rainforest, razor-clawed Banes follow on the other side of the Gauntlet to destroy the ephemeral forest. Once, the Changing Breeds guarded these places alongside the Garou, but humanity has spread too far and Gaia's forces dwindled too much to prevent such senseless destruction.

The spiritual reflection of a region's history allows Garou to travel into the past after a fashion. The Penumbra is a lens through which to view what was, and perhaps what may be yet again if the Garou accomplish the impossible and stop the Apocalypse. Such visions are bittersweet reminders of what Gaia's children have lost and what they fight for, or perhaps dare dream they might reclaim.

Garou have some natural advantages in traveling the Penumbra. They enjoy these advantages in the material world as well, but in the Penumbra, they have nothing to fear from human witnesses, Delirium — or other problems like highways and concrete walls. In wolf form, the Garou can run for hours and cover much greater distances than any human on foot. They're built to run, guided by keen senses and a knowledge of the spirit world. Even in Penum-

bral cities, they have less traffic and fewer buildings to get in their way. The greatest impediments to travel in the city are the omnipresent webs.

Spirits can help Garou traverse the Penumbra, as well. Many of them know the realm more intimately than werewolves do, and often have magic or knowledge of hidden paths to aid them in their travels. Packs greatly prize totems possessing such knowledge for the Penumbral superiority it brings. Some of them may remember a time from before humanity ever erected a single shelter in that place, others recall the glory days of ancient battles, caerns long ago scattered to dust, or the resting places of powerful fetishes. Some spirits leave *airts* — spirit trails that packs may follow. Sometimes the pack might find the spirit that left the trail and convince it to help them find their destination or provide information.

Logistical concerns remain a factor in Penumbral travel, just as they would in the physical world. Starvation is a risk because food is not as readily available. Animal spirits are usually less numerous than their mortal counterparts and more difficult to catch. Fruits and other wild edibles usually only appear in the reflections of orchards, oases, and longstanding groves. Even in great quantities they do little to fill the bellies of a hungry pack. The ephemeral “flesh” of animal spirits *can* sustain hunters. Spirits of prey animals are especially nourishing. Water is prevalent but often dangerous. Shadows of rivers can be much fiercer in the Penumbra, perhaps reflecting a time when the river was younger and faster. The spirits of water-dwelling creatures are some of the most ancient and hungry and care little for most land-dwellers’ concerns. Unwary drinkers can find themselves caught like wildebeest in a crocodile’s jaws. Gaian shapeshifters find it much easier to survive in the Umbra, owing to their many natural gifts. Their own Gnosis — a deep connection to the very spiritual life-force of the world — sustains them in the realm of spirits even when food is scarce. The mystical fuel within them slowly burns away to replace the nutrients missing from a growling belly. This is a natural reflex, and something every shapeshifter instinctively knows upon reaching the Penumbra. The rate at which travelers consume Gnosis in this manner depends on their activity level. A small amount can sustain a werewolf for a whole week if her travel is of moderate pace and activity. So leisurely a journey is a rarity in these war-torn times, but it does happen. If a pack must hide out for days or weeks from an enemy, or they await some event to transpire, they will not starve if they keep activity to a minimum. Vigorous activities, like frequent combat, hunting potent spirits or marching through a blizzard on the trail of a Black Spiral pack, burns energy much faster. Larger shapeshifters such as the Gurahl and some Mokolé, must consume more energy to fuel their bodies. By contrast, the Rokea tend to require

GNOSIS AS FOOD

If a shapeshifter must depend on Gnosis in place of food, she burns through it at the following rates:

One point of Gnosis will keep a normal-sized shapeshifter on her feet and nourished for a week of moderate activity, including regular travel. Especially large shapeshifters must consume two points, instead, or restrict their activities to smaller forms.

Combat, demanding hunts and difficult travel can burn through one Gnosis point per day, instead, or two Gnosis points for large shapeshifters.

less in the same amount of time, simply because of their bodies’ optimization for hunting and swimming.

Spirits respect shapeshifters more than other visitors to the Umbra, whom they see as intruders at best. Shapeshifters are equal parts flesh and spirit, and their place within the Umbra is apparent to all who look upon them. To walk in the spirit world is their birthright. A human sorcerer who reaches the Penumbra to seek answers of spirits might be met with disdain or indignant annoyance. A Garou commands respect, instead, as a creature born to live, fight and die in both worlds.

Technological devices function unpredictably in the Penumbra. A ritually-dedicated flashlight may accompany a Garou and even provide its light as normal — though it’s prone to flickering in areas of Wyld supremacy or at inopportune moments. It will last as long as its batteries hold out. To further power it requires bringing batteries along or else binding an appropriate spirit into it to make a fetish. Few shapeshifters require the aid of a flashlight in the Umbra, of course, with their heightened senses and many Gifts. Some, like Glass Walkers, might create such fetishes for their non-Garou allies or those werewolves who prefer Homid form. Not surprisingly, Homid-born werewolves tend to make up the bulk of the latter types.

Cell phones and radios are highly unstable even when they *do* function, but usually don’t work at all. Their batteries may power the devices, but in the Penumbra no cell towers exist — unless awakened by Garou rites — to carry the signals. The most prominent cell towers may cast a reflection in the Penumbra, in which case a werewolf might be able to get a weak signal while standing nearby, but any calls made to phones in the material realm suffer from a lot of interference. The Gauntlet can be a problem here, and at its strongest prevents any signal from passing between worlds. Computers suffer from similar complications. Even



if a werewolf could bring one into the Penumbra and find a way to power it — perhaps by binding electricity-spirits to the task — it would be limited to accessing only the data on its own hard drive. Fetish computers and smartphones do work, however, powered by the bound spirit. Rumors abound of Glass Walkers who have dedicated whole server rooms and attendant computer stations, awakened their spirits and convinced spirits of electricity and information to help maintain power and data flow between realms. Most Garou laugh off the notion as a foolish one. The Glass Walkers respond that technology is an ally foolishly ignored by the Garou Nation, and that if any hope exists of restoring balance to the Triat, the Weaver must be a part of it. Some even say that Glass Walkers have conducted moots online in this fashion. Few Garou believe it, and the Red Talons consider even the thought of such things blasphemous.

Other forms of technology still work properly in the Penumbra. Few are the werewolves who use guns, but a weapon brought across will function normally. A vehicle might draw the ire of Wyld-spirits with its noise and expulsion of noxious gases, but would drive as long as it had fuel and a road. Actually *bringing* a vehicle across the Gauntlet poses its own set of challenges, but it is theoretically possible. Bombs, chemical weapons and similar things work, although denizens of the spirit world might have their own methods of overcoming such threats — or retaliating against those who use them.

Meaning Made Manifest

While on the surface the Penumbra resembles the material realm, it is a place where analogies and hidden meanings become reality. The spirit world peels back the layers of truth to lay subtext bare as text. Wise werewolves know this, and experienced Umbral travelers learn to look for signs and clues beyond the obvious. Intent is a powerful force in the spirit world. Garou journeying into the Umbra on quests to fight for Gaia step into legend itself. Ancestor-spirits watch over their actions and Lunes carry word of their deeds, but the legend runs deeper than that. A werewolf seeking something follows a trail of concepts related to her quarry. If she seeks a path to the Dark Umbra or council with ghosts, finding the reflection of an old graveyard is the first step. There, hidden in long shadows and grave mist is a trail that conforms to no physical analogue, one that leads deeper into the very meaning of death itself. If she presses on, searching for the land of the dead, she will eventually reach it. Similarly, if she would find a way to reach the CyberRealm, following the webs leading from a Pattern Spider's lair into the heart of a Penumbral metropolis will take her by gleaming silver paths to the place she seeks.

Signs exist all along the questing werewolf's path, pointing her in the proper direction. Analogies take on life all their own. When a spirit suddenly flits across her path, its appearance has significance. To a werewolf searching for an ancient

weapon, glimpsing the spirit of some creature that history has forgotten is not something to ignore. When the Penumbral winds kick up dust through which moonlight illuminates a hidden trail, that trail will in some way lead the seeker to her destination. At the very least it will lead travelers to something capable of giving them clues, from elder spirits to lost Umbral outposts or even pocket realms. In the Umbra, coincidence is anything but; everything happens for a reason, even if the reason is couched in symbols and unlikely circumstances.

Shapeshifters also shed light on this aspect of the Umbra by their very presence. Their appearance may reflect clues about their inner nature. A proud Silver Fang's coat gleams as though illumined by moonlight even in the midst of day and her noble bearing seems taller, more impressive. A Black Fury smoldering with rage over the loss of a packmate carries a shadow that surrounds her like a storm cloud. All shapeshifters are larger-than-life and their Penumbral appearances reflect this in small but significant ways. The higher their Rank, the more pronounced the effects. An elder warrior of the Garou strides through the Penumbra like a giant, her fur rippling in waves that form fleeting murals of the battles she's won. Her eyes burn with the light of Luna's fury and she resonates with the primal power of Gaia.

Some mystics take comfort in the fact that their very stories become the stuff of legend. It is almost like they were meant to hunt that particular prey, or fight that battle, or awaken that spirit. The dreams of Gaia unfold as mythic tales, the actors her children. All shapeshifters take part in the tale of Apocalypse, and none as bit players. Every meeting, every rake of the claws, every song around the campfire is an important part in the history of the world. Whether anyone will remain to remember those stories is why they fight. Instinct, keen senses and deep ties to the spirit world guide the Garou on such quests. They must learn to trust their senses, and when *not* to trust them, for in a mirror realm of myth and legend given form not everything is as it seems.

Genius Loci

Some areas of the Umbra reflect the overarching feeling – the resonance – of the world around them. From Blights to Hellholes, places with strong Triatic influence are particularly vulnerable to this warped influence.

Blights

Blights stand as horrific little nightmares for the Garou Nation. They're hotbeds of struggle between the Weaver and Wyrms. Common wisdom holds that a Blight is everything that's wrong with the city, all in a tiny little spot. But what else are Blights? They're truth. Most of the city in the Penumbra pretends to be something it's not. It has promising variety and a coherent flow between the Triat. A Blight is a

naked, brutal honesty. It's the city experience, filtered down into a vicious, undeniable point.

Blights are teaching moments. Blights show young Garou where the world's going to, in a controlled little space. Blights are perfect training grounds; they serve as a live fire boot camp for urban Garou cubs, where their elders can watch training exercises from a distance in case anything goes awry.

As Garou grow in age and experience, they often become jaded. At a certain point, some see the city as a Blight all the time. These jaded Garou don't need to peek across the Gauntlet; they see the power of the Wyrms and the Weaver vying for control everywhere. It's not hallucination; it's just an active and trained imagination. They become used to seeing the terrible everywhere, and begin to assume that what they see is true. In essence, Blights are the future of a Garou's perception.

Storytelling Blights

In a story, Blights serve as objects of action. Garou can never truly feel safe, but entering a Blight is akin to crossing the Rubicon. It's a moment where players know shit is officially real. It's a moment when everyone knows it's time to check their Initiative pools. So from a storytelling perspective, Blights are all about framing. Blights give the Storyteller an arena of sort, which lets her control the tension in her chronicle. If the players know their characters will be raiding a Blight, the buildup to that moment allows them to open a bit, to play vulnerable, since they know the real danger doesn't start until they take that step.

Also, Blights allow a Storyteller to lay the symbolism on thick. The Penumbra in general allows for communicative, symbolic representations of the World of Darkness. If she has a little time to prepare, Blights can help her foreshadow elements of the story, hit home with moods and themes she wants to emphasize, and remind the players of the setting's personal aesthetic. This is best handled through specific combinations of spirits, contrasting the Wyrms and Weaver present. If you're telling a story at a hospital, Toxic Waste Banes and Mercury Pattern Spiders each could be interesting spirits. But together, they start to tell a story. They both show different facets of the same location. Look at spirits as lenses, as much as antagonists.

Chimares

Chimares are dreams made flesh. Some Garou believe that every dream has a Chimare representation. This is not true; the Penumbra's not big enough for that. They're certainly not representative of every dream, but they occur any time a dream reaches a certain degree of prominence in the cultural subconscious. Popular variations receive their own Chimares as well. For example, an entire cluster of Chimares represents variations on "performing while naked" and "falling" dreams.

Chimares are often malleable, depending on how powerful the dream is. Prominent, frequent dreams tend to have very solidified conditions. Fleeting dreams can be manipulated by a strong will, or an enterprising Theurge using the Rite of the Dreamtime. Dreamstuff is like clay, and a well-baked dream needs a lot of work to return to its softened state, if it can at all.

Chimares stand as an excellent way for a werewolf to find what she needs. If she knows what she's looking for, she can find an appropriate dreamer and trace the threads of their subconscious back to a Chimare. But nothing's ever that simple. If she doesn't know her dreamer, his dreams, and the symbolism within, she could be wandering into a place with dangers beyond her wildest imaginings. Sure, she might be able to get a long-extinct flower from that dream meadow, but if she hasn't done her research, she might end up eaten by the living, carnivorous earth beneath the meadow.

More troubling, some willworkers seek out and latch onto Chimares. These sorcerers treat Chimares with the same reverence Garou treat caerns. The dreamstuff holds much value for their magic. Such mages are a dire threat within a Chimare, since they can mold its contents far better than any werewolves could ever hope to.

Affecting dreams can subtly affect dreamers. Most people expect certain things of their dreams. If a visitor shakes those foundations, she can damage the dreamer's subconscious. If the dream shifts from serene to harrowing quickly, the damage can be permanent.

While not a common tactic, some Black Spiral Dancers invade Chimares as a sort of guerrilla tactic, where they'll warp a dreamer into a violent, jumbled mess for whatever ends they wish to serve. The easy path leaves a person completely debilitated, and liable to lash out violently and end their next day locked up. The challenging path creates a complex, ticking time bomb that destroys lives around him, and ends in a well-placed conflagration. Kinfolk are ideal targets for this type of invasion, since they have ready access to sept resources, and often direct access to sleeping Garou. This is a risky proposition, high risk, high reward, but since when have the Black Spiral Dancers shied away from risk?

Since perceptions in a Chimare are determined by the rules of the dream in question, they're as varied as the dreamers. However, a few recurring themes pop up in many Chimares, because the human brain works in certain similar ways between people. Dreams are highly dissociative. Often, perceptions in a Chimare are synesthetic; a visitor might see a smell, or taste a sensation across her skin. For those going in unaware, this can be a jarring experience. Even with extensive research into the dream, these sorts of senses can't exactly be trained. The best the Garou can hope to do is test the waters with lesser Chimare before any extended campaigns in the dreamtime.

RITE OF DREAMTIME

Level Two Mystic Rite

This niche rite allows the ritualist to fall into a deep trance or sleep, and force her dreams to take the shape of a given Chimare she's visited. During this time, she can reshape the Chimare to her will.

System: The ritualist falls into a trance, and must spend Gnosis to redefine features of the Chimare. She can only reshape single, simple ideas and objects with a single point of Gnosis. More complicated concepts, including basic laws of physical reality in the Chimare, require more Gnosis. The costs can be paid over multiple dream sequences, but should be somewhere between one and ten, with one being a minor or aesthetic change in the world, and ten being something severe as the full reversal of gravity. Objects so changed will remain for a number of days equal to the ritualist's Willpower.

If she wishes to make the changes permanent, she can invest five times the normal Gnosis cost. This will almost certainly require multiple dreams to accomplish. The expenditure must be spent during the normal time frame though, so within a number of days equal to the ritualist's Willpower.

Storytelling Chimares

As a storytelling tool, Chimares allow exposition about a character in the way nothing short of direct statements can accomplish. Take the opportunity to examine a Storyteller characters' psyches in depth. Even if it's not directly relevant to the story, add little symbols and hints about who the character is deep down inside. Even for otherwise no-name characters, this lets the Storyteller infuse them with identity. And who knows? The players may grab onto some of these threads and run with them, giving the chronicle a new and engaging direction.

Epiphs

Epiphs exist as purified, solitary conceptual experiences. They're ideas become pocket realms; an unfiltered, singular concept stretched into the entirety of reality in these surreal places.

If that sounds complicated, it's because it is. As three-dimensional, fleshy creatures with five senses can't entirely fathom what a given Epiph truly is. Who would want to visit somewhere in which the rules make no sense, where

the visitor's body doesn't work the way he expects it to, and where exactly one thing exists? Every Epiph stands on its own merit. Those that visit Epiphs successfully soon find their understanding in great demand, it isn't a job that any werewolf can jump into; it requires a fundamental understanding of raw, conceptual reality.

Finding an Epiph can be as much a struggle as understanding one; a traveler has to find a pure example of a concept then hope that it has bled over into the Penumbra. To find an Epiph of sex, he'd have to find the single place on Earth that most embodies "sex" as a concept. Needless to say, many werewolves balk at the challenge.

Expressing Concepts

Just because Epiphs focus on one idea, one concept, and one theme, doesn't mean only one thing can happen there. Certainly, some Epiphs exist with only one very narrow framework. Stories of one Epiph tell that those within simply hear the sound of wind against wings. They have no chance to interact or to make new sounds. Just one noise, from here until the Apocalypse. For some werewolves, the sheer focus of a place can help them learn highly specific ideas if they can hold onto their patience long enough.

Epiphs are concepts gone wild. To some, they're Gaia's purest forms of expression. They're unfiltered. They're random.

In an Epiph, associations run loose. If an Epiph is a realm of blood, it could be possessed of doctors, murderers, vampires, boils, hearts, love, family, zealous nationalism, womanhood, healing, rubies, sea water, bad horror movies, and anything else imaginable. These things can combine to form greater structures within the scope of the realm. A blood dimension may center on a castle built with thousands of siblings as bricks, blood as mortar.

What Are They Good For?

An Epiph can provide a hyper-specialized education in the field of the Epiph. For someone willing to decipher and digest the surroundings in an Epiph, there's literally no more comprehensive information about a given topic.

That level of focus can be overwhelming, though. Without a legendary attention span, a visitor is likely to overlook most of what's happening in the Epiph. After all, the Garou aren't known for their legendary attention spans.

Many Stargazers train for Epiph meditations, steeling their attention and tempers for extended periods simply watching, listening, and learning. At some time, the tribe expects most Stargazers to spend at least some time in an Epiph as proof that they are worthy of high Rank. Some Silent Striders have similar, but more utilitarian approaches. While most prefer to learn about their ancestral enemies from what information folk stories and other werewolves can provide, rumors of an Epiph that has all more accurate information persist among the tribe.

Inhabitants

Some Epiphs are completely empty, with no spirits linked to the color, sound, or thought that pervades the area. Most, however, house numerous spirits that align with the Epiph's conceptual reality. Inside the Epiph, they only have competition from other spirits of their ilk. This leaves them to become surprisingly powerful, and very territorial. Spirit residents demand a high cost in chiminage from Garou to allow them into their Epiphs. Worse still, that chiminage has to fit into the paradigms of the Epiph, or else the spirit will have no understanding of what's offered. They have no experience outside the realm, so they often can't even perceive outside concepts.

In rare cases, the Epiph itself is actually a spirit, a minor Incarna stranded in the Penumbra. Those in the Epiph literally enter the spirit's very being. While often more comprehensible than other Epiphs, the spirit rules completely. They can end a Garou's life without a second thought. In these dangerous places, Garou must tread carefully, and plan to appease the spirit before entering. Then again, they make for ideal deathtraps for enemies, if werewolves are willing to take the risk.

Glens

A Glen is a hotbed of the Wyld; a breeding pit for Wyld spirits. It's a place of healing, birth, and the very essence of wilderness – more a chunk of wilderness full of Gaian growth than it is a direct Wyld realm. It's nowhere near as intense and harrowing an experience as a Wylding.

Blights, Chimares, and Epiphs are all harrowing experiences for most Garou; they're places an average werewolf wouldn't want to visit. A Blight may be a good battleground, but it's absolutely awful. Travelers go out of necessity, not out of desire. Chimares are alien; they reflect human imagination and distort perceptions. Garou are not welcome in these places, they cease to be apex predators in a world where their hunting skills mean little. Glens, though, are idealized for Garou. For werewolves, they're like stepping from the freezing cold into a warm shower. Everything about a Glen feels nurturing to a Garou.

In counterpoint, a Glen makes it easy to just give up. Garou know that outside the Glen, the world's going to shit, everything's breaking down, and everyone's stabbing each other in the back. A Glen is like a hug, a womb, a homeland, and a community, all in the form of a spiritual realm. Stepping away isn't something anyone can just do without feeling its gravity.

A Glen usually manifests in the deepest, most lush parts of the wilderness, in places untouched by human hands. Of course, these places are slowly dying off – taking the linked Glen with them. Some have since detached from their analogues, and now take up space only as far-flung pockets of the Penumbra.

PLACES OF HEALING

Glens offer healing. Within a Glen, Garou heal all damage as if it were a type less significant. Bashing damage instantly heals every round. Lethal damage heals as if it were bashing damage. Aggravated damage heals as if it were lethal damage. Unlike outside a Glen, this downgraded aggravated damage does not leave scars. Aggravated damage caused by Wyrms emanations leave the Garou tainted, and the spirits within a Glen won't take kindly to that kind of taint entering its space.

Additionally, a Glen can heal less obvious harm. Garou with Derangements can make an extended Willpower roll (difficulty 8) when in a Glen. Each roll takes a week of recuperation; once she's achieved twenty-five successes, the Derangement fades. A Glen can only recover one Derangement at a time; particularly damaged characters may spend years in a Glen recovering.

Even Harano fades when in a Glen, but with it goes a werewolf's desire to fight. The Glen replaces the malaise of Harano with a serene, harmonious oneness with the Glen's environs. The Disconnected Garou will not leave the Glen under normal circumstances, and Harano will come crashing back down if he does.

Places of Learning

A Glen isn't safe, per se. After all, it's an oasis for Wyld spirits; it's a bastion of Gaia. Nature is inherently unsafe. But it's naturally so. If something dies in a Glen, it's because of the circle of life, not because of unfair intervention by a malicious spirit.

Whereas Blights stand as cautionary tales, Glens give Garou hope. While all the signs and portents suggest the Garou Nation will fall when the Apocalypse hits, a Glen gives insight into what the world may look like after the Garou emerge victorious. Somewhere deep within, when a Garou enters a Glen, she knows this possibility and it warms her heart.

Werewolves use this idealized setting as a place of learning. They can learn and practice long-lost Gifts from the wide expanses of Wyld spirits left unmolested by the Weaver and Wyrms. They can hunt the way hunts took place on Pangaea. They can battle without the significant fear of permanent injury, as wounds heal rapidly and cleanly.

Those Elders who caution against spending too long in Glens know that idealized settings lead to idealized training. Garou spending weeks training for combat in a Glen quickly grow used to a feeling of invincibility. That feeling doesn't go away until the first real wound suffered outside the Glen. Often times, that realization doesn't come until it's too late. It's easy to forget that the real world will kill, if given opportunity.

Places of Denial

In a Glen, it's easy to forget what it's like on the outside. But a less obvious problem is, in a Glen it's easy to assume that the Wyld is the answer. It's easy to look at a Glen and think that strengthening the force of chaos until it crushes the Weaver and Wyrms would fix everything.

Some Children of Gaia warn Garou to avoid extended periods in a Glen for this very reason. It breeds a righteous zeal that could mean an Apocalypse that ends with the Wyld filling the same, corrupted role the Wyrms fill now.

The Red Talons, though, don't give a shit. Their affinity for Glens runs deep, and they remain unconvinced there's anything damaging about extended time inside. Most answer accusations with a growl, then possibly a bite. More philosophical Talons say they understand the concept of unbalanced idealism, but they feel that Glens act as inspiration. Their value as motivational tools far outweighs the small risk of irrational responses.

Fortunately, Wyldings exist as a reminder of what the Wyld is in a pure form, and why overbalancing that expression of the Triad wouldn't be wise. No Garou in her right mind would want to live in a Wylding. Unfortunately, in the end times a few werewolves are very much not in their right minds.


Hellholes

Hellholes are to the Wyrms what Glens are to the Wyld. They're filthy pits that embody fear, pain, anguish, despair, and corruption. They're the worst the Penumbra has to offer, and every Garou learns the dangers of a Hellhole early on in their training.

Hellholes typically manifest analogous to the filthiest, most hopeless examples of human waste in the world. Contrary to the easy assumption, these places only sometimes exist in cities. After all, most humans don't want to live anywhere near the kind of nastiness that would cause a Hellhole.

Nuclear Repository Hellholes

One of the largest Hellholes exists far out in the New Mexico deserts. The United States government built a repository deep under the sands of Yucca Mountain, in order to store transuranic radioactive waste from reactors and tests. Nobody lives for miles outside the repository, and the cavern goes for miles, deep within the mountain.



At its heart rests long-term storage containers for the waste. At that very point, across the Gauntlet, is a Hellhole like few others. At its level of isolation, the monsters within breed without concern. In places, they're birthed faster than they can eat, so the monsters pile up, devouring one another and struggling for every possible inch of the realm. Nearby Uktena know damn well this Hellhole exists, but they also know the risks of trying to destroy it. The best-case scenario would be a full annihilation of all Garou involved. The more likely outcome would look more like the corruption of the White Howlers on a smaller scale.

This is a point of constant frustration for the Uktena, as Yucca Mountain was once a place of great power. Just centuries ago, it boasted a near nonexistent Gauntlet, and led directly to a Glen. This story is not unique. Similar lands in Belgium, Canada, China, France, Japan, Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, and a few other nations house such repositories. All are built far from human civilization. All quickly become host to Hellholes.

Urban Hellholes

Sometimes the city gets too big for its own good, and moving the unmentionables out of sight, out of mind becomes too much of an effort. In these cases, cities will sweep their detritus under a proverbial rug. These places often evolve into Hellholes.

New York City holds one of the most well-known examples of this phenomenon. On Staten Island, the Fresh Kills Landfill is one of the largest landfills in the world. At over 2,200 acres, it's a massive testament to just how much shit humans throw away. Likewise, its corresponding Hellhole is fearsome enough that it'll be the source of songs and stories for centuries after its demise — if the Garou can destroy it.

In addition to serving as a dumping ground for city waste and having the most unfortunate name for a landfill in the world, it also acted as a staging area for the remains of the World Trade Center after the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks. While the grounds already hosted a Hellhole, this emotionally charged addition only bolstered its prominence as one of the worst pockets of terror in the Penumbra.

This particular Hellhole looks like its namesake. The spirits of pain and overindulgence look the parts of demons, devils, and suffering souls. The dark mirror of the landfill is that of mounds of hot, fleshy corpses and devices of torture. Crucifixions mark the roads through the pit. Jagged bones jut up through the fleshy pavement. Bat-like horrors shriek across the always-night sky. The grim joke among the Central Park Sept of the Green is that the Fresh Kills Landfill is one of the least deadly places in New York. The Landfill will never kill something it could just as easily torture for all eternity.

At its center lies an avatar of Lady Aife, the Caliph of Pain. This information comes from the lone Silent Strider scout that both made it in, and made it out of the dread hole. Once word spread of the avatar, rumors flew about a portal to Malfeas beneath her throne.

The Garou couldn't fight it directly, due to its massive size and power. But through political lobbying, they managed to shut down the landfill, and are now having it repurposed into a city park. Unfortunately, this very positive action will still take decades to fix on the Umbral side, and will end in numerous human deaths and possessions in the mean time.

Trods

Trods are places that connect the Penumbra with the places of the fair folk. They're found in mushroom rings and rock arches, and all the places provincial people tell tourists to avoid. On the surface, Trods look the closest to the world around them of all the various pockets of the Penumbra. This appearance is a trap that's tempted many a Garou to untimely ends.

Trods look almost like real world paths, clearings, lagoons, or whatever. But the way through is never so simple. Trods don't often obey natural laws, and they never obey logical laws. One known Trod is a simple, winding road through a forest. Along the side of the trail, every few feet a skull rests on the ground, some growing flowers, some weathered from the rain, some aged to dust. No matter which route a traveler takes, he will always end up where he started after an hour. He'll be lost forever if he doesn't know the way. Only by walking backwards can he escape the path, but doing so for an hour will take him to his destination — anywhere in the world. The tale of this path is a case in point that all young Fianna learn. The follow-up lesson is that no two Trods are alike — so unless a young werewolf is at the Loch Laggan Trod, she shouldn't even bother trying to walk backwards.

Keys

Those in the know call these strange methods of passage "keys." Nobody can pass through without either a key, an escort — or breaking down the door. The fae have no trouble passing through Trods. They instinctually know just how to make it through, and they can escort whomever they please. They can also withdraw the benefits of their escort at a moment's notice. This isn't something they advertise. More than once, fairies have escorted Garou into traps, then withdrawn their escorts, leaving them ready for a hunting party of other fae to harrow and hunt. Sometimes, this is done to settle a vendetta. Usually, it's done for the thrill of the hunt. While the fair folk don't need to use the proper key to travel through a Trod, they do know it, and can share it if they're so inclined. Since Trods can connect far-off places inaccessible to even Moon Bridges, they don't give this information away cheap.

REND TROD

Level Three Mystic Rite

This rite allows the Garou to literally rip into the fabric of a Trod's reality. She takes her claws to any solid object within the Trod, and she slowly tears through it. She continues to rip and tear through that object, and any number of others until she's torn up a quarter mile of the Trod in total, at which point the key vanishes for a year and a day, and anyone can pass through.

System: The Garou tears through the Trod as stated. From the moment she begins tearing, however, all the fae in the Trod immediately know something's wrong, and where that something is happening. Once she's made the full tear in the Trod, the player rolls for the rite. The base difficulty is 5, plus one for every interruption that stops her from her rending.

Rather than waste their time with the mercurial laws of the fey, some Garou know an old rite that plays more to the werewolves' strengths. This simple rite works for any werewolf in a Trod, allowing her to walk it without needing the key. While this rite presents an easy way through a Trod, it does alert any fae in the area. Werewolves who use the rite often relish the opportunity to take out their frustration on the creatures responsible for trapping them.

Living History

Trods often look similar to their real-world counterparts, but sometimes they keep to an older, often dated or even demolished appearance. In the real world, a circle of standing stones may have long since fallen, weathered, and sunken into the dirt. In the Trod, the circle stands painted and vibrant, with moss teasing at its toes and its crisp edges shine in the golden sun.

For historians, these sorts of Trods are invaluable. Stories are one thing, but living them is a whole different layer of knowledge. By seeing and touching long-dead things the way they were when they stood on the Earth, a historian can garner an insight with only her own biases. Unfortunately for the would-be relic hunter, anything removed from a Trod quickly breaks down into cobwebs, dust, teeth, and other assorted strangeness within minutes. Reality doesn't welcome the stuff of the fae. Even if a Garou takes a camera into the Trod and photographs what she finds, the photograph will garble and warp outside the Trod's bounds. The few Garou

who have used rites, Gifts, and other spiritual tricks to preserve the remnants of a Trod find little luck. Everything breaks down. Awful coincidences happen nearby. Plants die. People have accidents. Homes catch fire.

This also pertains to spirit life. Long-lost spirits sometimes stay immortalized in Trods. The nature of the Trod preserves them, and replenishes them if destroyed, but means that they can never leave.

Party of a Lifetime

Sometimes, the fairies hold parties in Trods. Rarely, they hold them in places others can stumble upon them. Rarer still, some favored few — mostly Fianna — receive specific invitations to these parties.

Exceedingly few Garou have stories of their attendances at Trod galas. Most of these stories go from entering the Trod straight to leaving the Trod. Any memories of the party fade quickly, leaving lingering sensations the partygoer can only assume are remembrances. A guest at a fey party also emerges with newfound sensitivity and awareness. He comes out more creative, inspired, and passionate. This quickly grows destructive for him, as he's consumed with a desire to create, to shape, and to love. This desire overwhelms everything else; duty, family, and other previously important parts of his life falls by the wayside under the weight of this creative surge. With a bit of willpower, the Garou can resist the call. But some such Garou forget to eat, forget to sleep, and wither into death shortly thereafter.

Webs

Webs are fully calcified zones of the Penumbra, where the Pattern Web runs so thick that it's solid. They're the Weaver's playgrounds, where pattern spiders swarm like water in a flowing river. The Web's Gauntlet is not a caul; it's a steel vault door.

Webs are bridges, Webs are circuits.

Webs serve as gates, ladders, or bridges to the Weaver's deeper Umbral realms. A sufficiently powerful and motivated pack of Garou could fight through and climb the Web to reach Gaia-knows-where in the Weaver's Near Umbral strongholds. That sounds easier than it is. Every rung of that Web grabs, sticks, pulls, stings. Every few feet, another spider attacks or another monstrosity is ready to pull a werewolf in. Just being close to the Web sucks out a Garou's Gnosis, with the intent to render her an automaton — another cog in the machine. And in the end, all of that struggle only gets her as far as the door to an Umbral realm.

A Web's other main purpose is that of a circuit, a free-flowing passageway for information flowing between the Weaver and Earth. Electrons flow, spiders carry, and the web reverberates with data constantly. For recon-minded Garou, Webs can provide dangerous but highly valuable information

about the Weaver's machinations. With rerouted information and creative cryptography, Garou can suss out the Weaver's upcoming plans and projects. Striking at its infrastructure before it's fully installed destroys its valuable resources, and is significantly safer than attacking an established outpost.

Wage Slaves

Unlike some of the manifestations in the Penumbra, Webs look like their real-world analogues, only more built up. An office complex in the real world remains an office complex in the Web, but an office complex covered with the calcium, steel, fiber optic cable, silicon, silicone, and silk of the Pattern Web.

One major difference is the lack of humans. Humans cast no shadow on the other side of the Gauntlet, but in a Web every single human, every drone, and every wage slave, has a corresponding spirit guiding its every move. Usually, these spirits are smaller Pattern Spider Gafflings. At 8:45am, a rush of spirits barrels in from the subway station. They congregate around the cafeteria around noon. Careful, attentive Garou can peek across, identify a web-worker and its spirit analogue, and trail them through the Umbra.

These wage slaves all have a part to play. They have no true central leadership; every cog is as much worker as manager and each carries the necessary encoding to guide the project. Like a colony of ants, if werewolves crush most of them but leave a few alive, they'll rebuild as if nothing ever happened. In essence, every moving part could become the core or brain of a new machine. Every beating heart carries the spark of a greater machine. Even if they're cut off from Weaver communications, they'll continue to carry out their protocols, building infrastructure for the time when they inevitably reconnect.

Unexpected Webs

Ironically, the efficient machines of the Weaver tend to root down in shrines to inefficiency. They limit creativity and progress, while creating nothing. They bog down otherwise functional businesses with excess bureaucracy. The Weaver sees this as a feature, not a bug.

The machine, the Weaver, has to hide its operations from prying eyes. Even though most of its work takes place in the Umbra, the flesh side of their operations can draw attention. Wage slaves start looking inhuman around the seventy-second hour of constant work. The machine operates in the cracks, and a banal, bloated bureaucracy has plenty of cracks.

The Weaver will root down anywhere it can. After all, Webs aren't exactly unobtrusive to those peeking across the Gauntlet. It will, however, sometimes try to branch out a little from the obvious. Its current favorite is the relatively recent American "lifestyle center" retail phenomenon. These places are small towns that function as open air malls, catering to chain boutique store interests and focus on restaurants

and mass market entertainment to keep shoppers on the center's grounds for as long as possible. They're cookie cutter, milquetoast places that give boring people just enough spice in their lives to make them feel interesting, while still only featuring national brand chain stores with no cultural identity. Needless to say, the Weaver loves them.

Wyldings

Wyldings are the Wyld's answer to Hellholes and Webs. Unlike Hellholes and Webs, however, Wyldings are very rare, and they grow rarer with each passing day. The ones that survive to this day are almost entirely disconnected, soon to be nothing more than part of the Flux Realm. The Earth's death throes are sending these realms hurdling away.

Wyldings are chaos and creation embodied. They're incomprehensibly wild, even by Garou standards. From second to second, the entire realm can shift and change entirely. Senses mean nothing when most everything changes by the time a visitor's brain can process it. It's a little bit of everything alive, all at once, and it's too much to handle for even the most centered Stargazer.

Outside of the raw experience, Garou have few reasons to visit Wyldings. After all, they're very hard to find and Wylding spirits aren't inherently kind. One of the few reasons that Garou actively seek out a place of chaos is to find pure examples of natural elements. Physics says matter cannot be created or destroyed, only changed. A Wylding doesn't care about physics, and constantly creates new things. If a werewolf knows where to look, and can weather the storms and oddities of the realm, she can find a fresh example of whatever natural thing she seeks, untouched by man, untouched by time. The elements in a Wylding are as they were in Pangaea.

Wylding Spirits

Wyldings are immensely dangerous, fickle creatures. What they want now may have nothing to do with what they wanted five minutes ago. Wyldings can however provide werewolves with some very specialized, very powerful Gifts. Werewolves may occasionally chance upon one of these spirits in a Glen — and those in search of a Wylding will restrict their search if they have the time. Unfortunately, the only way to be sure of finding one of these fickle spirits is to travel to a Wylding. When a pack has to find a pure elemental to help in a pressing battle or to save someone's life, a Wylding genius locus is her best bet — if she can find one.

Other Layers

Learned Garou know that the Umbra they can enter naturally is but one of many other layers to the spirit world. Werewolves have learned to walk in two others — the Astral Umbra, realm of thought and principle, and the Dark Umbra,

home of the unquiet dead. Each of these layers touches the world with a Penumbra of their own.

The Periphery of Thought

High above the Umbra floats the Astral Realm. A protean realm, thoughts and dreams give life to laws and concepts and forms. Like the deepest realms, the Astral reflects aspects of the material world. Here it overlaps with the Penumbra, and like the Near Realms and further beyond, travelers may venture from the Penumbra to the Astral.

The journey begins in places where people prize thought and imagination. The most potent of such places include prestigious universities and well-funded libraries. Glass stairways and trails of clouds lead upward from Penumbral libraries. The Weaver's web strands lead skyward, as well, toward shapes in the clouds and barely visible spirits dancing on ethereal paths.

Even on the ground, the Astral Penumbra reflects ideas and ideals. The buildings take on a hazy, almost dreamlike quality. Their geometry sometimes defies the very laws of physics. A place might be normal on the surface, but within it is a vast, cavernous chamber roofed by clouds and swirling lights, where letters and symbols appear on the walls and reconfigure every time someone blinks. The space within a building exceeds the dimensions of the outer structure, just as the vision of its inhabitants defies boundaries.

Traveling upward is not the only way to venture into the Astral from Penumbral centers of knowledge. Because thought wanders the Astral and gives life to concepts, shapeshifters may journey inward, into their own thoughts and powerful dreams. As creatures of great passion, all of Gaia's half-spirit children feel powerful emotions, and their Gnosis connects them to the oldest wellspring of dreams. They rarely seek the Astral, but when they do their need is great and their presence like a storm.

Spirits encountered in the Astral Penumbra are strange, even for Epiphlings. Theirs are perspectives so broad that they encompass whole concepts, or so alien that even half-spirit shapeshifters of Gaia have a hard time understanding them. While they can provide answers to many questions, few werewolves have the patience or the wits to unravel the riddles tied into knots around those answers. For Epiphlings, questions themselves may well be the answers, and in the asking is truth found. Tell that to an antsy Get or Red Talon and one is as likely to receive the head of a warhammer or a curled lip as acknowledgment.

Curiosi are common as well. Many drift in the sky above learning institutions in Slumber, awakened when enough thinkers provide them with power and purpose. Conceptual spirits embody nearly any concept imaginable in the Astral Umbra. Werewolves may seek them out in order to learn powerful Gifts and find new perspectives on



the war. Theurges are especially fond of these spirits, and Stargazer Theurges most of all. Many nights have borne witness to long, strange conversations between Garou mystic and Epiphling, and it is not so uncommon to see Curiosi flitting about such a meeting, endlessly interested in what transpires.

Many reasons drive packs to seek out such places. More contemplative werewolves find such areas conducive to their meditations upon the nature of the Triat and the war. Before venturing into the Astral Realm or the Deep Umbra, or some of the more bizarre Near Realms, werewolves desiring to arm themselves with knowledge seek out the wisdom of conceptual spirits and their ilk.

The truest way to fight the fear of the unknown is with knowledge. Where the Penumbra reflects the Astral, rare as it is, knowledge and the resultant thought becomes reality. If the Penumbra is a realm where meaning takes on literal form and the Astral is a realm where thought itself takes on shape, the places where they overlap become areas where one's hopes and dreams have a real impact on the spiritual landscape. Any Garou worth her salt would fight to protect such places and keep them free of the Wyrms' will, for there a Gaian creature may dream of a world no longer torn asunder by Apocalypse, of a world restored ... and those dreams become an embodiment of hope itself.

The Edge of Darkness

In the vastness of the Umbra, facets besides the Penumbra reflect aspects of the material world. One such place is the Dark Umbra, the abode of ghosts. It is a terrifying shade of the mortal world, a realm of deep shadow and looming dread. Formed of the fears and terrors of mankind made manifest, it is a place where that most ancient fear holds sway: fear of the Dark.

The Penumbra meets with the Dark Umbra in the reflections of dark places, appropriately enough. Places that resonate with death and entropy. A Penumbral graveyard is the most obvious example, but something like a seedy network of back alleys home to frequent violent crimes also works. Even a hospital that caters to the poor and sick can manifest aspects of the Dark Umbra. Any place touched by death and the fear of the same is one where the boundaries between Penumbra and Dark Umbra overlap. People claim such places as "haunted" in the material world, and while the majority of the public derides such ideas, the believers are justified. Strange things happen in haunted locations.

In such places, the idealized reflection of the world gives way to visions of fear, pain and loss. The ground itself is gray and lifeless. A malodorous mist hangs over the cold earth like the breath of the dead. Shapes droop or crumble;

a field of nameless headstones is cracked, covered in moss, pitched at odd angles. Churned earth surrounds unmarked graves, though an onlooker can't say whether something was digging to get in or trying to get out. A pall hangs over the area, afflicting not just the eyes and the body but the heart itself. Garou do not fear death in the way that humans do and better endure such feelings of misery and despair. Their very spirits exist in special connection with Gaia's life-force, and many have seen the realms to which their ancestors go after leaving their bodies. Even so, wise werewolves tread lightly in the places where Penumbra and the Dark Umbra overlap. They may not fear death itself, but it nips ever at their heels.

The spirits that inhabit such places are ghostly, though not ghosts themselves. They may take the form of carrion animals, gaunt figures or the forms of weapons. A graveyard of war heroes sees spirits take the form of faceless soldiers or the instruments of war, monstrous amalgamations of vehicles and guns. These spirits are much less friendly to Garou than other denizens of the Penumbra, although their magic is strong and they know secrets lost to the rest of the spirit world.

Traveling further along these paths leads a werewolf to the Dark Umbra itself. What appears to be a freshly-dug grave in the Penumbral cemetery leads deep into the reeking earth, to tunnels older than the Garou people. Worm-things and the bones of forgotten dead both scramble in the tunnels, reaching for the warmth of outsiders. Where lights fail and hope falters, the traveler passes into the Dark Umbra itself. Traditionally, the Garou seldom had need to reach the realm of the dead but as more of reality falls into entropy, it's more common.

As the modern world crumbles and strife spreads like a sickness, more and more stretches of the Penumbra take on traits of the Dark Umbra. Graveyards overflow and stinking crematoria exude an aura of fear. In third-world countries where conditions are so unsafe that people die every day, whole Penumbral villages and towns become beacons of Dark Umbral unrest. Ghosts walk among spirits and stalk the living. These places are powerful in the Shadowlands, but havens of ghastly Wyrmtaint in the Penumbra. Conceptual spirits of hatred, fear, pain and death flourish, and these things are rarely so benign toward Garou as Naturae. Their actions further the cycle of suffering. They wallow in fear-soaked shadows and cultivate landscapes wrought from Man's nightmares. Reaching these areas is difficult and extremely dangerous.

Despite the unpleasantness of these places, even packs of Garou may have reason to travel through the Dark Penumbra. They might seek a road into the bowels of the deathly realm, pursuing secrets lost to the living world, or a foe that fled therein. The Wyrms' forces use humanity's fear — of death, of the unknown — to foster nightmares,

mental instability and evil thoughts. Deep-rooted fear of what lies beyond life is exceedingly difficult for mortals to shake and means that once a place has taken on the air of death, it is nearly impossible to be rid of it. Great effort on both sides of the Gauntlet can accomplish it, but few packs have the time to spare in a world facing the Apocalypse.

Faces in the Mirror

This section presents some example reflections of various places in the Penumbra, both smaller locations that a Storyteller can drop in as needed, and a fuller example that ties a range of Umbral reflections to one location. The list is far from exhaustive; in the World of Darkness, conflict comes in many forms. The Penumbra is perhaps the most important realm to the efforts of Garou and their Fera brethren. Even the most conflicted areas serve as key battlegrounds in the war.

St. Jacinta's Medical Center

This hospital faces the issues endemic to the worst struggling hospitals: unstable generators, thin medical supplies, overfull waiting rooms and unsanitary conditions. Its reflection is one of mixed hope and misery. It appears dark, its exterior splotched with organic-looking stains. Around it the shadows are deep but a warm light shines from within. Small, weak Banes scurry over the outer walls, but Gaian spirits dwell within. They, too, are small but fierce, representing the stubbornness of life itself as the sick people in the physical hospital suffer but cling to life.

Clayton City Park

A rare bastion of tranquility in the web-strewn Penumbral city, the park is home to many Naturae. Tree spirits watch over the grassy hills and small animal spirits make their dens throughout the thick growth. Thanks to conservation efforts spearheaded by local Glass Walkers, the park has stood for decades now unspoiled by city development. A Glade Child stands at the center of the Penumbral park, and its roots spread throughout the whole area. It has served as mentor to several generations of werewolves. On nights of the full moon, the Glade Child meets with Lunes who bring news of distant Penumbral glades.

Moors Bottling Company Chemical Waste Plant

Few things are more horrifying than this chemical plant. Its toxic byproducts seep into nearby soil, rivers, and belch black into the sky. In the material world, it is a massive facility with state of the art machinery, fenced in and well-guarded. It lies just outside city limits, near the system of rivers that feeds into the sound. In the Penumbra, it has risen into a fortress of black, rusted

metal and eerie green glows. Its fences are sheets of stretched pelts, where the heads of skinned creatures still shriek in agony. Spires of smokestacks jut from the ruined earth like the fangs of a half-buried monster. Screaming Banes circle overhead and crawl over the area like angry ants. The bellows of some monstrous *thing* rumble from deep within the plant, a terrible Wyrmbest whose very presence seems to leech life from the surrounding area. The sky is black with foul smoke; shapes form in the thick columns of smoke and look upon outsiders with malice.

Festival Market Town

A Web formed around a lifestyle center, Festival Market Town is typical of the breed. The children shop at the same overpriced doll and teddy bear customization shops. The parents shop at the same size 0-12 fashion outlets. They all eat at the same not-so-cleverly themed fusion restaurants with the same colorful kitsch candy cocktails and the same “imported” draft beers. They watch the same big budget Hollywood movies. They eat the same overpriced pretzels. And the workers? They’re controlled by the same pattern spiders. They go to work every day, talking about how they’re going to find something better tomorrow. They feel rebellious when they give their friends their 10% employee discounts under

the table. They stop by the same buffalo wing sports bar — in the lifestyle center, of course — on their way home, where they play quiz games and root for their local football team. One of them roots for the rival team, because he’s an individual. Festival Market does have one minor difference from other Webs of its kind. In the center, the architects built a fountain for children to play in. It uses a natural water supply running from the nearby rivers. This tiny bastion of the Wyld stands in stark defiance of the technical monstrosity around it.

Tall Pines Cemetery

The spiritual graveyard is a place of washed-out grays and long shadows. Even for the Penumbra it is still and lifeless. The few spirits that dwell here are Epiphlings representing fear, emotional pain and death itself. The landscape is uneven and ill-kept headstones protrude from the dead grass at odd angles. Few of them have writing upon them; the only marks are vague scratches made by some passing entity. On one edge of the graveyard stands a large mausoleum of glistening white bone. It is the reflection of the tomb of one of the city’s founders, an eccentric architect. Some say he designed the city with a street plan forming a mad occult symbol, a great spiral. Visitors find the doors barred, but the stench of decay and the clinking of chains emanates from deep within.



Oak Ridge Library

Founded when the city itself was young, the library is renowned for its quality. Its reflection seems impossibly broad and its exterior is one of bound leather. Within its doors, the ceiling looms above, always just out of reach and covered in scrawled graffiti. Epiphings of knowledge and some Curiosi hover and drift through the air here among towering bookshelves. Few of the books lining the shelves stand out, but those that do dwarf the others. They represent the most important manuscripts to the city's people, but their pages tell of the spiritual ramifications of events that occurred in the physical world.

Alsart Oasis

The desert in which this oasis stands long ago swallowed up its material counterpart. For centuries the oasis served as a haven for travelers, whether human, animal or supernatural. The oasis became so important that its reflection has become a miniature forest unto itself. Pools of water so clean it's almost sweet dot the well-trod paths. Desert brush is green and thick. Spirits of water and air are common and strong, compared to the powerful earth and fire spirits that thrive in the surrounding desert. Also common are Englings who see the oasis as a bastion of Gaia's beauty. Reaching these Englings is difficult but they reward seekers with much information.

Primrose Orphanage

In the material world the orphanage looks to be in poor shape, in need of renovations and a lot of funding. Its spirit reflection shines with an inner light and stands tall, with perfect edges and a glimmering veneer. In the light of the morning sun, translucent feathered wings unfurl from the back of the building in the blink of an eye and disappear just as quickly. A powerful spirit of hope watches over the place and protects it from the taint that infests the neighborhood. Whether it can much longer withstand the corrosion of the area is in doubt, but it will lend its aid to any shapeshifters in the area.

Panacea Pharmaceuticals Office Building

A state-of-the-art office building with all new construction, the latest in computer technology and plush seats for the people working the phones, this building is the very picture of progress. Its Umbral counterpart is an infernal reflection of that progress. It is twisted and riddled with holes lit from within by green fire. Banes swarm through the mouth of each tunnel or wriggle up from the fetid slop surrounding the building. The Weaver webs that cover the place drip with chemical poison, and the Pattern Spiders long ago fell to the corruption of the Wyrms as they tried to cocoon the building. These Bane Spiders now quickly wrap

up any unfortunate trespassers and inject them with a venom that devours the victim from the soul outward to the body.

Lonely Highway

This poorly maintained highway was built to bridge two states together. Its reflection is cracked and broken, and still exists only because of the amount of work and money that went into it. Intended to solve transportation issues in the lonelier parts of the state, it went far over budget and failed. Now killers, thieves and not-quite-human things haunt its long, isolated stretches. Spirits sometimes travel it, though no vehicle-spirits do any longer. Because it has been all but abandoned, it runs through areas dominated by other Penumbra landscapes: forests, deserts, ghost towns. Their inhabitants resent the highway being there and lash out at most travelers. Garou might find it a path to distant Realms or destinations within the Penumbra, but the journey is fraught with dangers.

Hashima, The Ghost Island

For nearly a century, Hashima Island stood as a small city supported by a coal mine. Its sixteen acres were packed to the brim with coal workers, and the necessary staff to support their lifestyles. At times, over five thousand people lived in the tiny city. In 1974, after decades of waning coal importance in the face of the petroleum boom, Hashima Island closed, and its remaining inhabitants fled for the mainland. The city stayed behind, leaving a complex collection of apartments and businesses, and an entire mine completely empty. Now, Hashima stands host to a whole new ecosystem; the entire place has a dense population in the Penumbra, and some of it bleeds across into the physical world.

The Ghost Island

This is important to address up-front: Hashima is not haunted. That's not just the party line the Japanese government spews forth. Despite all the news reports, internet articles, and documentaries, Hashima isn't haunted. It wasn't evacuated after a massive tragedy. The inhabitants didn't die violent, terrible deaths. They left because business left. Despair came with the job loss, but this was no worse than a factory closure. So why do the Garou still call it Ghost Island? They have two main reasons:

It's not haunted, but spirits play the role of the haunting dead. They fulfill the expectations of haunting. This has quickly become a strange mishmash of cultural and sub-cultural perceptions of haunting. In this way, every visitor to the island, everyone writing a story about the hauntings, every person participating in this odd mythology leaves an impression on the spirit-scape of the place.

On the other side of things, Garou call it the Ghost Island because it's a hotbed of supernatural activity. The island has all manner of Umbral manifestations. Areas of the tiny island

TRAVERSING HASHIMA

The island's recent real-world popularity inspired Google to take a trip with their Street View cameras, which gives any Storyteller wanting to use Hashima a great deal of inspiration. An intrepid explorer wandered most of the island, and took panoramic 360 degree images around the main path through the derelict city. Interested Storytellers and players can take a virtual tour, as well as view thorough satellite imagery and maps. Hashima Island has all sorts of tiny nooks and crannies that can work as sites for Umbral strangeness. Even if not using the maps and photos in play, consider taking some time to wander around the island and get acquainted. It'll help with descriptions, and it'll give a better idea of the island's scope.

contain Blights, Chimares, Epiphs, and more. Even though the island is quite a bit larger in the Umbra, these realms bleed into each other, causing unexpected and chaotic reactions. The variety of Umbral activity is at critical mass, and any rapid growth at this point could cause catastrophic consequences.

The selection of locations here just scratches the surface; a Storyteller using Hashima can use them as inspiration to make up different Penumbral locations on the island.

The Refinery (Blight)

The coal refinery mixed all the nastiness of coal, the rape of the land, and the rapid growth of industrial reliance on natural resources. In this place, the Wurm and the Weaver each had immense power, but neither could manage to come out on top. Now, they've bled together, mixed with some of the strange fever dreams of visitors. The local spirits look the part of humanoid smoke clouds, but the smoke is made of fine crystalline carbon. Their eyes burn red like dying coals. Sometimes, they bleed through the Gauntlet and show up in the corner of a security person's field of vision.

In the deepest recesses, the refinery's Umbral representation bred machinery; hidden areas with vast, sprawling gears, chains, and pistons with no real purpose other than to move in perpetuity, but that may conceal gateways to the Atrocity Realm. The crystal cloud spirits sometimes torture one another on the machinery, strapping the smaller ones to moving chains, or forcing them through gears.

Tomorrow Brings Opportunity (Chimare)

Tomorrow Brings Opportunity is a Chimare hidden in a small human resources office in the administration building. This office didn't house a manager, a hiring agent, or even the officer in charge of acquisitions. This office kept the poor sap who had to deliver bad news, include wage cuts, hour reductions, and layoffs. For the last few years of the island's operation, he had to tell thousands of workers that while today may look bleak, tomorrow brings opportunity. The sad thing was, he did his job very well. He sold the dream, even as he handed over an uncertain future. He'd fib about hearing rumors that the Japanese government wanted to convert the island into a lucrative resort. He talked about how the new workforce would be drawn from the current staff, and how government contracts meant guaranteed pay for years, and full pensions. "You don't need to contact us," he told them, "We'll contact you. Just be patient."

The Chimare now looks the part of every one of those dreams of a better life. It's the neighborhood of an idealized 1970s suburban Japan. Faded sepia in tone, it has clean, boring houses, children playing outside, and well-behaved dogs. But the dream is far from perfect. Even the most optimistic of these workers knew deep down the truth of the matter. When a visitor turns her head, she gets flashes, glimpses of the truth. Those children are starving. Those homes are empty, with bank notices on the doors. The dogs are feral, roaming the streets in mangy packs. These glimpses never last more than a brief moment. But each time, they get closer and closer, until it's too late, and the fear and dread overtakes her.

Wild Reclamation (Epiph)

Very quickly, plants and animals have overtaken the factories and apartments of Hashima. One spot near the center of the city, one tiny crack, offers access to an Epiph of Reclamation. The crack comes from a young oak tree pushing up through nearly a foot of cement in the Umbra.

Reclamation is an ouroboros of the large eating the small, the swarms of the small eating the large, then the large among the small eating each other to start the cycle. Worms eat dirt. Birds eat worms. Cats eat birds. The dirt eats cats. It's not just a cycle of consumption; spirits build institutions and infrastructures at break-neck speeds. They assemble buildings, just in time for wrist thick kudzu vines to grow over and yank the structure straight back to the ground.

Clearly, this rapid overgrowth and predation brings danger. Standing in one place for more than a couple of seconds means something will try to subsume, topple, or

devour a visitor. From an academic standpoint, this pure expression of cyclical nature can teach invaluable lessons to someone interested in learning just how nature overcomes manually constructed developments. Many Red Talons come to the Wild Reclamation for just that reason.

The Woods (Glen)

While most of Hashima's residents lived in massive apartments, the management owned houses along the edge of the island. These houses had thin walls and weak roofs; Japan's houses tend toward intentionally temporary erection, but these houses even more so because they were just homes away from home, never meant as family residences. Soon after the island's abandonment, brush overtook this district. Brush gave way to trees, and within a decade, a

visitor would have to know what to look for if she wanted to find evidence of these old houses.

This place is now the site of a Glen. In the Umbra, thousands of tight-knit tree spirits formed a solid wall around the clearing. Inside, the Wyld has taken over. Waterfalls flow in every direction, rushing through patches of jungle and swamp that roll over one another. The entire area on the outside appears no more than one hundred yards in diameter, but inside the space goes on for nearly fifty miles. No two of those miles look like they belong next to one another. A curious side effect of the island is that all the thousands of animal spirits within are hybrid creatures with the features of at least four different beasts. Cats prowl with pincers ready, worms shriek and slither to their holes, and scorpions howl at the moon.





Chapter Two: The Near Umbra

A place beyond space, the Near Umbra is simultaneously far from the Penumbra and as close as a shadow. The strange paths between the two often make sense in metaphor even though the evidence of a werewolf's senses tells her otherwise. Werewolves can travel to the Aetherial Realm via the Penumbral skies, climb out of Webs into the CyberRealm, or open an otherwise unassuming doorway into the misty strangeness of the Near Umbra between the Realms.

Near and Far

While each of the Near Realms has its own laws governing travel within their borders, the Umbral space between them is not well-defined. So far removed from the Penumbra, travelers have less frame of reference for what they experience. Neither their lupine nor human instincts guide the Garou here, but instead their spiritual senses do upon such journeys. They need every edge they can get because traveling the Near Umbra is far more dangerous than the Penumbra. After all, getting lost in the Penumbra might lead a questing pack astray, return them to the material world somewhere far removed from

their original destination, but within an environment they can understand.

Getting lost in the Near Umbra might land a pack in Malfeas.

Actually venturing from the Penumbra to the Near Realms is more difficult than simply moving from one place to another. Physical distances do not apply to the Near Realms, except as they fit within that Realm's laws — such as troop movements in the Battleground. A werewolf can run forever in the Penumbra and never reach beyond the Earth's shadow.

Intent, destiny, will — all are integral components of Umbral quests. Werewolf mystics say that if you search for something in the Umbra, you will find it if you are destined to, and if not you will find something else. What you find may not be the adventure you sought, but it will likely lead you toward your goal. Meaning and myth are powerful forces in the spirit world, always acting upon travelers. If you seek the Battleground, begin your search with the desire to find battle. Look for signs of conflict. The tracks of a predator or the collateral damage caused by a battle of spirits, these are things to follow. And the further you follow such tracks with your heart set on reaching past

the shadow of the world, the further you drift from the world you know.

Airts

Many of the signs travelers follow are in fact airts, or spirit tracks. They function like road signs for Umbral travelers. The increasing prevalence of spent shell casings, blast craters and derelict vehicles warn travelers that they're steadily approaching the Battleground. Tire tracks in the mud may not have been made by ephemeral vehicles but by spirits themselves on their way to or from the Realm. In another Realm, they might be a trail of broken cockroaches leading to Scar, or of golden leaves leading to Arcadia or the Summer Country. Spirits are quite adept at following these trails, and wise werewolves seek out spirits for their aid in traversing the Umbra.

Airts take on different forms depending both on the desires of the travelers and the nature of their quest. They range from animal or vehicle tracks to scents drifting on the air of blood, bone, sickness or even oil. They can be beaten paths or trails of thick roots in otherwise barren lands. Airts can even be shimmering contrails left behind by spirits like the trail of a slug passing through the realm. Sometimes they have less tangible effects. The airts left by Wyld-spirits have a way of rejuvenating those who follow them, while Wyrmspirit airts nauseate and slow any Gaian creature desperate enough to travel upon them. Whatever their form, they stand out and even the most oblivious werewolf finds them impossible to miss. Whether or not a werewolf follows them, the tracks are there for anyone with a modicum of Umbral sense to see.

Spirit airts are useful but not always reliable. Spirits are fickle and prone to wandering off on their strange paths or vanishing entirely as the spirit reincorporates and reforms elsewhere in the Umbra. Even relatively benign spirits see things differently from werewolves, and may not fully understand their would-be allies, or might encounter danger even the Garou can't protect them from.

The most prepared werewolves make use of all their gifts — and Gifts — when they venture deeper into the Umbra. Airts, magic, totem spirits, pack tactics and their many forms all give the Garou advantages that few other Umbral travelers enjoy. Sometimes it takes everything they have in order to succeed, but the End Times call for great heroes and epic deeds. No werewolf ever forged legends with routine actions and weak efforts.

Between Realms

However she accomplishes it, once a werewolf passes beyond the Penumbra, the spirit world changes drastically. Away from the familiar land and sky, things get strange. Shapeless void swirls about travelers, though it is not empty.

Not always. Sometimes the traveler catches a glimpse of stars in the distance beyond form, or streams of color and light flecked with tiny particles of glimmering dust. If she looks up into Near Umbral "space," she can see the thirteen Near Realms orbiting her. If one particular Realm is her destination, it seems the closest, though it is difficult to tell distances in a place where distance has no real meaning.

Werewolves don't travel upon pure void. They move as they do on Earth and its shadow: by running. Sometimes it looks like she stands on perfectly clear glass overlooking a black ocean of stars, but often there is just enough of a faint plane beneath her paws that a werewolf can orient herself. Directions have little objective meaning outside of the Penumbra, but to a werewolf they serve as a way to make sense of a world devoid of physics. The loftiest Realms are "up" and it's easy to keep moving "forward," and the traveler's mind processes this movement in a way that she can understand. To do otherwise is to move as a mind unclad from flesh, and few werewolves have the ability to even comprehend that feat.

One disorienting trait of traveling so far into the Umbra is the lack of sensory input. Or rather it is the extreme changes to the sensory information with which the quester is familiar. Shapeshifters rely heavily on their senses, and many on scent especially. Outside the Near Realms themselves, the only real scents are those a pack brings with them, or those of rare spirits. Sometimes, spirit-spoor is an airt unto itself — but the Umbra is vast and packs are not always so lucky to find an easy trail.

That is what werewolves must deal with at first, but it is not the whole story. Some experienced travelers learn how to smell the spirits of concepts, or phenomena with no physical counterpart. When asked to describe such things, unsurprisingly many werewolves find it difficult to convey the process in words. For example, a spirit of joy might smell "blue" to a werewolf, because it reminds her of the summer sky she loves so much. She might pick up the scent of solder on Umbral winds if she's seeking the CyberRealm. It's even possible to pick up on scents that would have long faded in the material world due to physical processes, such as rain covering up a spoor trail — some especially keen-nosed werewolves can sometimes scent the past itself. This usually means the passing of an entity or events that occurred within the past couple of days, but things are always strange outside the borders of the Penumbra.

Sound is not muted but meets with a lack of medium in the Umbra. The sounds of a traveling pack echo through airless space, with no real direction. It can be disconcerting to hear things with keen wolf ears and have no idea how or where the sounds are bouncing. A distant sound, like the howl of a lost packmate, becomes nearly impossible to follow properly because of this, so groups do well to stick

together. With effort and experience, Umbral adventurers can learn to compensate some for the openness of the Near Umbra, but it is best not to tempt fate.

Things change yet again as the traveler draws nearer to her destination. Pocket realms exist along the path from Penumbra to Near Realm that reflect both worlds. Finding the Battleground by following the signs of war and bloodshed will eventually lead her into a shadowy place with the occasional abandoned tent, littered with cast aside guns and gear. Most of the time, Garou transition straight to one of these places from the Penumbra; it is rare for them to move in the empty space between realms. Instead, a werewolf leading her pack to a Realm starts somewhere appropriate in the Penumbra and goes from there. A werewolf journeying to Wolfhome starts in a forest or well-kept reflection of a city park, where she can run as a wolf. Going to the CyberRealm instead starts by following the Pattern Web into electric jungles, and so on.

The transitional areas reflect the destination, but haven't completely left elements of the known world behind. Journeying to Pangaea, the flora and fauna with which a werewolf is familiar slowly give way to plants and animals that the world has not seen for thousands, perhaps millions of years. Eventually she looks back and cannot see any hint of the world she knew, and now she has breached the border of Pangaea. Now the only way back is an equally arduous journey, or powerful magic.

Spirits and some shapeshifters know other methods for traversing the Umbra. Many of those are safer than wandering spirit paths or braving the open space. They are collectively known as Moonlit Airts.

Moonlit Airts

Nighttime in the Umbra, perhaps ironically, best illuminates many Garou quests. Luna shines a silver light on things that the eyes might otherwise miss, and though her ways are couched in enigmas, her mysterious gifts help werewolves persevere in a dangerous universe. By the light of the moon, aided by Lunes and spirit guides, packs travel deep into the Umbra beneath the watchful eye of Luna. It is comforting for werewolves to travel basking in the light of a great spirit patron, and the Lunes, unpredictable though they are, serve as allies in distant realms. In the End Times, every ally is a resource best treasured.

Moonlit Airts come in two forms: Moon Bridges and Moon Paths.

Moon Bridge

Moon Bridges span the distance between two caerns, serving as both a way to maintain diplomatic relations between septs and quickly travel safely across great distances. At either end is a Pathstone, carefully maintained and

fiercely guarded by the sept. If the Pathstones lose their magic, the Bridge vanishes and reclaiming it is incredibly difficult. Caerns that host Moon Bridges are some of the Garou Nation's greatest resources and receive due accord.

Moon Bridges only appear when opened at both sides by both septs performing the Rite of the Opened Caern (W20, p.206) in unison — assuming the septs established the Bridge previously via the proper rite. Upon completion of the rite a luminescent tube emerges from the Pathstones and arcs through the Umbral sky. The Bridge itself is not solid but Garou may travel upon it like an actual bridge. It gives just a little beneath the feet, like it was made of a soft rubber, and yet puts little resistance back. It's almost like stepping into gelatinous water, neither cold nor frozen. It is not wet, but shimmers and waves like water-reflected moonlight.

The very apex of a Moon Bridge passes through the Aetherial Realm, and is one of the safest places in all reality for a werewolf. Luna herself guards these holy paths and to date no enemy has been able to assail a traveling pack in the celestial reaches. Lunes watch over those buoyed by moonlight, but an avatar of the Celestine Luna oversees every Moon Bridge journey through the Aetherial Realm. Any tainted beings — or blasphemous acts like trying to destroy the Bridge itself — meet with the full wrath of one of the mightiest Celestines.

Moon Path

In contrast to Bridges, Moon Paths are pathways of moonlight that cross the Umbra with few set origins. They might shift from moon phase to moon phase, or even from night to night. They exist only at night, appearing as paths of silver light flecked with starry dew crisscrossing the Umbral sky. Mist often surrounds them, making it difficult to see far past the Path's edges, though the Path itself is clear.

Werewolves traveling upon Moon Paths often liken the experience to treading upon very soft and spongy ground, only without the moisture of soil or tickle of grass. Some werewolves, homids especially, find the feeling disconcerting, as though they are walking on clouds that will not bear their weight. A Moon Path will bear any weight upon it without stress, from the largest Crinos to even titanic Archid forms of the Mokolé — though the latter might have trouble fitting on the Path in the first place.

Moon Paths are by their nature less stable and predictable than Moon Bridges. They wend through the Umbra in shifting paths and rarely reach into the Aetherial Realm. Paths aren't as heavily guarded, though Lunes do patrol them, but the Lunes themselves can pose a danger. They are capricious spirits and their moods change as do the phases of the moon itself. Werewolves have some idea of what to expect at each moon phase, but even then there is no guarantee when it comes to Lunes. Other spirits make

use of Moon Paths as well, and not all of them are friendly to the Garou.

While traveling a Moon Path, packs sometimes let the werewolf whose auspice moon shines overhead take over as alpha. The auspice moon often dictates what form challenges along the path take. In these circumstances, the pack's normal alpha might not be the best equipped to lead.

- **No Moon:** During the new moon, Moon Paths disappear or become nearly invisible. Using them is dangerous at this time because the Path itself might vanish beneath the traveler's feet, and at best they are far more difficult to follow. The one benefit is that packs have less of a chance of encountering enemies along the Path, but they will be lucky to find their way to their destination and not come up short somewhere else. More than ever, travelers must rely on their own wits, senses and introspection to proceed.

- **Crescent Moon:** The Theurge's moon fills Moon Paths with riddles and enigmas that challenge a pack's wits and knowledge of spirit lore. Along the way stand various spirits, many of them Lunes, who will demand the solution to such puzzles or challenge packs to a battle of wits. The strength of one's fury is of little help against these tests, where quick thinking and cunning prove far more valuable.

- **Half-Moon:** Perhaps the most dangerous time in which to travel a Moon Path is during the half-moon. During this time, spirits of the Triat vie for control over the Path. All seek to use it to reach their destinations or to deny their foes from using it. Sometimes spirits of other courts seek control of the Moon Path, forcing travelers to pay chiminage or perform some service for them in order to proceed. Cunning packs might turn these contesting forces against one another, or make a temporary alliance with one side.

- **Gibbous Moon:** During the gibbous moon, capricious spirits tend to occupy the Path. While they are not overly hostile, they do demand chiminage in the form of songs and tales, of lessons learned, deeds done, even interesting encounters (such as meeting other spirits along the Moon Path). Unsurprisingly, Cahalith are the favorites of these spirits.

- **Full Moon:** Hostile spirits brimming with the ire of the full moon travel the Moon Paths, looking for unwary travelers and easy prey. Lunes themselves become full of wrath at this time and difficult to interact with at length, for their Rage is nearly as potent as that of Gaia's warriors. Sometimes the hostile spirits will drive travelers from the Moon Path; such unfortunate souls can land anywhere in the Umbra, depending on how far they walked the Path before falling.

Many forces vie for control of Moon Paths throughout all moon phases. They are an important strategic resource in a spirit world shaken by war, so control over the Paths

provides a tremendous tactical advantage. Because Moon Paths are by their nature unpredictable, like spirits of the moon, the only way to know where they lead is to find out by using them, and that leads to risk and danger. Of course, no Garou worth her salt is a stranger to the dangers of the spirit world.

Other Methods

Other options do exist for Umbral travelers. They are neither as well-known nor as frequently traveled, which has its advantages and drawbacks. Many of these transit methods present their own unique challenges, and packs using them must usually do so on their own. In the End Times, anything that can serve the warriors of Gaia is a tool best not overlooked. Only a foolish shapeshifter proceeds without caution, but sometimes caution must be thrown to the Umbral winds. The Apocalypse will not be stayed by conservative action.

Spirit Gates

Spirit Gates are mysterious portals mistrusted – and rightly so – by most werewolves. Once they were common in Umbral travel and guarded by Lunes, allied spirits and other shapeshifters. Now many of them are gone; destroyed or scattered to the spirit wilds. When used properly they allow instant travel from one area to another, even between Near Realms. Indeed, all the Near Realms had Gates leading to the other Realms at one point, though much knowledge of them has fallen as another casualty in the war. Several of the gates were destroyed, but most survive, even if their secrets do not. The rediscovery of a useful Gate – perhaps one leading from Wolfhome to Pangaea, or anything leading to the Summer Country – might yet tip the scales in Gaia's favor.

Activating a Spirit Gate is a fairly simple matter for spirits and creatures with strong spiritual aspects, like Gaian shapeshifters. It requires just a moment of concentration, calling upon the Gnosis that ties a spirit to Gaia and the world. Once the gate opens, it floods the traveler with sensations that vary between individuals. Some feel a sinking feeling like they're riding a descending elevator. For others it's a tingle and a rising glare behind their eyes, like a head rush, that leaves them standing in a new place once it recedes. The first few trips through a Spirit Gate are disorienting, but eventually the traveler learns to master the new sensations.

Owl's Wings

Packs who serve the totem spirit Owl gain wings in the Umbra. This affords them a huge advantage when traveling, whether the Penumbra or the Near Realms. They can fly from place to place, circumventing many of the hazards that plague Umbral explorers. Upon the wings of



Owl, a pack can even entreat some of the loftiest spirits in their home among the spirit sky. If thrown from a Moon Path, those with wings can find their way back to it, and have much less to fear from becoming lost in the Umbra. Among other things, wings let Owl's packs follow airts that other werewolves cannot reach, and so find lost paths and hidden treasures. Often these lost paths are only otherwise accessible to the Corax, who spend much of their time looking for Umbral secrets in their raven form.

Cautionary tales circulate of Icarus-like hubris by winged werewolves, flying too close to the moon or so high into the Aetherial Realm that they vanished forever. Most pay these stories little heed. Owl's packs use their boon to travel where they must. They rarely seek to venture so deep into the Umbra as to risk becoming lost. Those who do risk much by venturing into places few werewolves were meant to go, so must stand to lose much more by refusing. In these troubled times, caution is a luxury the Garou can scarcely afford.

Spirit Trains

Ephemeral trains thunder across the Umbra. The Bone Gnawers use one that travels just beneath the Umbral ground, called "the Subway." It delivers Bone Gnawers all across the spirit world, not just the urban Umbra, and

stops in every Near Realm with the exception of the Arcadia Gateway. For obvious reasons, few Bone Gnawers use the train to go to Malfeas, but when the need arises to quest into that dark realm it is one of the safest options.

The Silent Striders use a train they call the "Midnight Express" that visits the abodes of ghosts and dead spirits. Similarly, Nuwisha werecoyotes make frequent use of a "Ghost Train" — possibly the same as the one the Striders use. These trains journey into the Dark Umbra and Penumbral ghost towns, where shapeshifters may recover secrets long since thought dead and buried.

Pattern Web

The Weaver's Pattern Web crosses all throughout the Umbra. It was the Weaver's work that erected the Gauntlet in prehistory, and now her mad Pattern touches nearly every corner of the spirit world. It serves as a network of communication and travel for Weaver-spirits, such as the ubiquitous Pattern Spiders who scurry along the strands, spinning ever more webs. Doing so has its risks, but werewolves and other shapeshifters can sometimes use the Pattern Web itself to traverse the Umbra.

Would-be Web walkers face difficulties even knowing where they're going. The Theurge Gift: Web Walker (W20

WALKING THE WEB

The dangers are significant for using the Pattern Web without the Web Walker Gift. Those werewolves who try discover that getting lost is a distinct possibility, even when trying to remember the way they came — navigating requires an Intelligence + Engimas roll, difficulty 7. Avoiding dangers or finding a specific part of the Pattern Web may push the difficulty as high as 9.

p. 165) allows a Theurge and her pack to travel upon the Web just like a Pattern Spider, free of interference from Weaver-spirits. The Gift still doesn't tell the travelers just where they're going, but experienced Web walkers know how to orient themselves properly. While traveling, packs enjoy the safety of traversing a Moon Bridge, though the Pattern Web does not yet reach the Aetherial Realm and Celestines can offer no protection to the pack. Werewolves protected by the Gift rarely need it, anyway.

Theurges and Glass Walkers often employ Pattern Spiders to help them negotiate the Web. The Spiders can serve as guides or provide detailed data on the layout of the local pattern. Some Glass Walker packs even have Weaver-spirits as totems, which provide valuable insight in any Web-based excursion.

Other threats lurk among the strands: hostile Weaver-spirits, including Incarna that can't be fought with fang and fury, enclosed connections that lead to the Cyber-Realm's Computer Web, or even Wyldlings who see the travelers as Weaver servitors and attack relentlessly.

In the End Times, none of the Triat is friendly toward the Garou. Spilling the blood of those who should be allies is another symptom of the balance long ago lost to cosmic strife.

Domains and the Dream Zone

Realms called domains lay scattered across the Umbra. Some exist solely through the power of specific entities, and others through ancient forces like Dream. The most familiar of these to the Garou are the tribal homelands, sustained by the spiritual legacy of each tribe and its totem. Each stands as a vision of the tribe's greatest heroes and ideals, and as long as a tribe survives and remains true to its roots, the homeland remains strong.

Each of the Triat has its own domains that reflect the very essence of those forces. None of these domains are safe to visit for lesser beings, but sometimes shapeshifters

visit them as part of some epic quest. Such is the way of legendary times.

Dream Zone

The Dream Zone is one of the greatest domains, a realm unto itself formed by the collective dreams of humans and shapeshifters. It is a place wherein archetypes rise as real as solid earth in the waking world, where symbolism is more real than any literal meanings. On the periphery of Near Umbra and Deep Umbra, the Dream Zone lies outside the reach of Moon Bridges and even the Pattern Web. If any Spirit Gates reach the Zone they were long ago lost to the Garou Nation.

The simplest way for a shapeshifter to reach the Dream Zone is to fall asleep within the Penumbra. Her slumbering mind reaches through the mist of thought and into Dream itself. The realm reflects the dreamer's own dreams, of course, but so much more than that. She can press on, journeying deeper into the dreams of others and their mysteries. One of the most intimate bonds between packmates is to venture within each other's dreams.

Deeper still are the most primal archetypes of Dream and all it contains: love, death, flying free, falling and drowning, blood and fire — anything that recurs in the minds of dreaming creatures. The facets embodied through Dream have no limits, and even defy the laws of the rest of the spirit world. Anything dreamed by living things since the very first creature to draw breath appears within the Dream Zone.

Shapeshifters can pursue these secrets and answers by undertaking dream quests — a journey into the depths of Dream, experiencing different facets that form a collective dream-story. These often lead from one aspect into another, such as the facet of imprisonment in cold stone and silver chains. As she moves through the dream, she might finally yank free her chains from the wall and tear it down to reveal an earthen tunnel that reeks of the grave. She runs through the tunnel as it collapses around her, burying her in the earth. As she claws her way to the surface she finds that she stands atop a precipice, with enemies and allies filling a valley below her. They turn their gaze upward to look upon her, the wind itself hushed as though the world holds its breath. Clearly she is feeling overwhelmed with something, perhaps a position of responsibility within the pack, tribe or sept. Further interpretations require introspection or perhaps even another venture into Dream.

All things, even those a dreamer has lost or forgotten, exist within the Dream Zone. These are not like the Dark Umbral reflections of things dead and destroyed. Dreams gave them life but they exist only in Dream. Someone visiting a lost loved one in Dream is not truly conversing with the shade or spirit of that person, but rather the facet of him that lingers within the mind of the dreamer. She could not pluck that fragment from Dream and bring it to the mortal world as a form of resurrection. Or so the sages say, but who knows? Within the

Dream Zone, anything is possible, if a visitor can dream it. The tales of great heroes who would challenge the impossible for love, glory and honor are as powerful an archetypal facet as anything that ever entered into Dream.

Mokolé have a special relationship with Dream. Through Mnesis they remember ages of the world lost even to the legends of younger races. During their First Change, they dream into being their Archid form; these powerful forms embody primeval facets of predators and prey from during the Age of Kings. Mokolé may enter the Dream Zone through Mnesis quests even if their bodies lie in the material realm. They wander through depths of Dream that other shapeshifters cannot reach; few can, save for the wisest of magi.

Malfeas

One domain whose very name bristles the fur of the fiercest warrior is Malfeas, realm of the Wyrms. It is a festering wound in the heart of reality, oozing the evils that gnaw the bones of the world. Everything that is wrong with the universe finds a home in Malfeas. The realm contains profane mockeries of everything that has existed in the material and spirit worlds. Vast metropolises stretch over the horizon, built along a spiral symbol representing the heart of the Wyrms. The daily grind is literal in these wicked places, where gnashing gear-teeth grind up tormented souls and sluice them into filth-encrusted sewers. The spiritual sludge vomits out into facilities that reconstitute the damned into patchwork people. Some of the "cities" are hideous organic scars in the blackened earth. Buildings with facades of quivering skin stretched taught over skeletons of yellowed bone. Glistening, organ-like towers reach into the sky to spew forth clouds of deadly gas. Anything that can shock or disgust, or that someone fears, anything that the Wyrms can twist into a sick parody, exists in the Wyrms' realm.

Nothing in Malfeas is friend to Garou. Knowledge exists here but the secrets are hazardous to a werewolf's spirit. The most benign entities in the realm are the ephemeral fragments of once whole spirits and creatures now endlessly tormented for the Wyrms' amusement. Bane lords rule their degenerate duchies and oversee the blasphemous rites of the Black Spiral. Dancers are forced along the Spiral until their bodies and spirits seethe with Wyrms-taint. Few forces in the universe can redeem such an unfortunate soul.

Other powerful enemies of Gaia make their lairs in Malfeas. Corrupt Incarnae, the most powerful of twisted mages, deranged cultists and possessed slaves. Malfeas is the heart of the Wyrms' power in the Umbra. It is the womb birthing evils that plague every realm. As much as every Garou would love to strike the realm from the Umbra, it is too vast and powerful. Yet some feel that the answers to defeating the Wyrms lie within the diseased skin of Malfeas. Perhaps finding a way to cleanse the realm would cure the Wyrms of its madness, even temporarily, or maybe defeating the Wyrms

would utterly undo Malfeas. Some Theurges feel that even if the Wyrms was struck down, Malfeas would remain a pit of spiritual corruption, only now without an integral part of the Triad. The whole of the universe would come to decay into a Malfeas-like hell. The most radical theories say that even in its mad state, the Wyrms' presence prevents complete cosmic dissolution by binding all that taint within its titanic form. One thing is certain: until balance is restored, Malfeas will be the center of the taint eating at the universe.

The Abyss

Many realms of nightmares drift through the Umbra. Some claim to be the source of all fears; others are reflections of the worst the human heart can conjure. Realms of endless battle and coiled nests of monstrous Banes drift among plains dedicated to every evil a twisted mortal mind could imagine. Only Malfeas itself is regarded with more dread than the oblivion of the Abyss.

The Abyss is a yawning chasm of darkness sometimes described as a tear in the fabric of creation. The darkness is bordered by a vast, craggy cliff-face, marred with countless caves and crevasses. Things that are lost find their way here to be forgotten. It falls so far that it seems bottomless, and it stretches so far across that its width appears endless. Even flight-capable Umbral travelers of great endurance and courage cannot cross the expanse to the other side.

No one really knows what the Abyss is or how it came to be. Some Garou say the Abyss is where the Wyrms went mad and declared it would not stop until everything became nothing. Philosophical werewolves think it may be some necessary balance – for every place there is, there must be somewhere that isn't.

Different tribes have their own spin on these stories. The Bone Gnawers claim elder vampires slumber here, waiting for the Apocalypse to rise and drink the world dry. The Get of Fenris believe it will spew forth the worst hordes of Wyrms-spawn in the end days. The Stargazers say Klaital, the greatest ever of their tribe, descended fully into the depths and climbed out with the knowledge he had gained. The Silent Striders whisper that the Abyss would close forever if the greatest Garou hero sacrificed herself in the darkness; they add that it is still open despite the sacrifice of many supposedly great heroes.

Other shapeshifters have their own views. Bastet believe the first den-realm became the Abyss when it was corrupted and consumed by the Wyrms. The Mokolé view it as the antithesis of Mnesis, the place where memories are forever lost. Ananasi say a bloated Goblin Spider endlessly spins web to bridge the darkness and when she finally succeeds the Apocalypse will begin. The Nagah believe this is where the Wyrms first struck the spirit world. They believe Banes, Wyrmspawn and other

STORY SEED: LOST HEROES

The Croatan never appeared here — their sacrifice ensured their memory was preserved and their legend lived on. The Bunyip were different; their secrets were lost to the fangs and claws of their cousins. The mystery of their deep connection to the Umbra is an enigma Garou still try to decipher.

Rumors have spread about rock paintings found at the mouths of caves deep in the pit, accompanied by the organic droning of didgeridoos. No one has seen who is responsible for these. Are these the remnants of the murdered tribe who fled into the Umbra before the Garou could exterminate them all? Are they ancestor spirits who have fallen into the Abyss because no one remembers their deeds? Are the secrets of the Bunyip about to be lost forever?

No one knows, but even though the risks are tremendous the Garou can't ignore what may be their last chance to salvage some hope from past sins.

beings of corruption and decay climb from the unreachable far shores; one for every decent thing lost to its depths. The Corax tell none of their own stories. They hate and fear the Abyss but find its impenetrable mystery irresistible. Many come for answers but few speak of what they find.

Regardless of the legend, the Abyss is the ultimate destination of all lost things. Scraps of lore and forgotten spirits from long-dead tribes come here to wither and fade; some say the tribes themselves wander the caves before they finally fade from memory.

Coming and Going

Entering the Abyss is simple. The Abyss has an affinity for those who are lost, even unknowingly. Many paths lead here although most do not advertise their destination; an unwary traveler may find herself standing at the edge of the cliff before she realizes what has occurred. One who falls from a Moon Bridge or who becomes otherwise disoriented may find themselves at the Abyss.

Departing the Abyss is more difficult because most exits are found deep in the pit, closer to oblivion. The Abyss is hungry. It doesn't want anyone to leave. It wants them to stop existing. The destructive powers of the Abyss work to destroy its own Realm. More cracks and caves lead to exits in the depths because the Abyss has degraded its structure and torn holes back to the Near Umbra.

These holes appear as tributary cracks in the cliff. Many cracks are also home to Abyssal dwellers or other dangers. Characters seeking an exit may roll Rage or Gnosis (difficulty 7) each day to find a tear and escape back into the Umbra. A botch spills the character back onto the cliff face, higher up and further from escape than before. The Abyss somehow clings to characters suffering derangements or other mental conditions, such as Harano. Characters increase the difficulty of escape by 1 for each condition, to a maximum of 9.

Descending the Abyss

Packs may climb, fly or follow one of the paths to descend into the Abyss, assuming they do not wish to leap to certain destruction. Each method has its own challenges as outlined below, but two hazards common to every route are the loss of sensation and the risk of staring into the Abyss (W20, p. 328).

Climbing

The cliff is scalable but handholds are treacherously loose, and powerful winds whip across its face in ever-accelerating, unpredictable gusts and cross-winds. Climbers must make frequent Dexterity + Athletics rolls or lose their grip and plummet towards the depths and destruction. These rolls start at difficulty 6 near the top of the cliff and steadily increase to 9 near the bottom as the buffeting winds increase and the rock crumbles beneath fingers and toes.

Flying

Flyers need to keep their wits and land before being obliterated by the maw of the Abyss. The irregularity of the cliff-face, scarcity of reference points and difficulty seeing anything makes distances difficult to judge. A flyer will also find that the downward winds make climbing out of the depths an exhausting task as she makes little upwards progress with each beat of her wings.

The two greatest risks with flying are judging the point of no return and avoiding looking into the maw and succumbing to Abyssal terror. Storytellers should call for frequent Willpower rolls for flying characters, as well as Perception rolls for her to judge the depth she has fallen to. Flying characters trying to land should make a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty based on the moon phase) to find a suitable perch and roll Dexterity + Athletics (Flight) (difficulty 8) to reach it. Failure on the flight roll means the character missed the perch and must keep flying until she can succeed in another Perception roll to find an alternative. A botch on this roll means she has lost control and is tumbling towards the maw. Storytellers should decide how many opportunities the character has to recover from her fall, with fewer chances the closer she is to oblivion.

The Three Paths

Three paths lead from the top of the cliff and snake their way to the bottom. The paths cross back and forth but only rarely intersect. At these points the character may change paths but this does not reduce the obstacles she must overcome. Each path is named for the metal most commonly found on it: iron, gold and silver.

The Iron Path

Striated bands of iron ore line the floor of this path. Its main danger comes from the countless caves it passes. The safest of these hold bones or the rotting remains of previous victims — and possibly the remains of whatever killed them — but many more are home to lost creatures or stranded spirits. These dwellers have usually gone mad, but most develop a keen desperation and cunning to ensnare the unwary traveler. Despite the dangers of these encounters, the Iron Path is the easiest path to travel.

The Gold Path

The Gold Path is named for the nuggets of pure gold found along it. These require only a small amount of effort to remove should characters succumb to temptation. Removing this gold invokes a curse making all rolls within the Abyss +1 difficulty for each piece collected (maximum difficulty 9). The path has riches scattered heedlessly upon it, as lost items of material value tend to find their way to the Gold Path. Taking these does not invoke the curse but the riches often cover the path's gold — it is dangerously

easy to accidentally collect nuggets this way. The Gold Path is the most physically precarious of the paths, and the deadliest. Travelers frequently encounter fissures, sheer drops, crumbling stone, and other obstacles. The darkness and winds confound judging the scale of these obstacles. Increase the difficulty of rolls to overcome these obstacles by 2, notwithstanding any additional difficulty from the curse.

The Silver Path

Shifting veins of silver flow haphazardly across the Silver Path. This metal is favored for forging powerful klaives but requires considerable effort to mine. The noise of mining risks attracting the attention Abyssal dwellers but does not carry any curse from the Realm. The Silver Path is the most mysterious of the three paths. It is enlightening but perilous to spiritual wellbeing. This path is not physically demanding but each traveler brings her demons with her and risks her soul. Great totemic carvings watch and judge the travelers on the path. Few if any travelers return from the Silver Path unchanged. Werewolves who have traveled this path agree that they faced challenges that made them reassess their beliefs and self-worth, but no two agree on the specifics of these trials. Storytellers should present challenges to the pack based on their personalities, fears and hopes.

Abyssal Denizens

Madness and despair usually claims those few creatures who call the Abyss home. Lost cubs, stranded Umbral travelers and even humans lost in physical reality sometimes



find themselves within the Abyss with little understanding of how they arrived. The humans rarely survive but those that do often become warped and twisted. These strange beings can be wild and difficult foes, but if rescued they may be cleansed of the taint and returned to reality and whatever life they can find.

Spirits

Spirits must materialize when they enter the Abyss, rendering them physically vulnerable to its dangers. A spirit forced into Slumber drops where it stood, risking further abuse and possible permanent death. Despite this risk, the Abyss is a beacon that somehow draws spirits to it.

The peculiar nature of the Abyss also makes it particularly resistant to change. Spirits cannot use any Charms that would reshape reality or allow escape. Break Reality, Open Moon Bridge, Reform and Solidify Reality automatically fail, as do similar Charms.

Many spirits hide away in caves and crevasses, inert in Slumber. These include archaic spirits ill-suited to modern existence, including spirits of forgotten concepts and some of the worst spirits unleashed during the Impergium. Characters may also find malevolent spirits who were defeated long ago and forgotten. These spirits can be difficult to identify and stories are told of would-be heroes rescuing them from the Abyss to only later realize the horror released back into the Umbra.

The safest choice is to let Slumbering spirits lie, but nobody sings songs of heroes who choose discretion over valor.

Nightmaster and the Hive of the Jagged Maw

Nightmaster is the name taken by an insane former Shadow Lord who once sought the power to devour the sun from the Abyss. When he stood alone in the lightless, senseless void he offered the Abyss his soul, allowing it to consume his every weakness, leaving behind nothing but a Rage-filled shell.

Nightmaster now strides with impunity across the Abyss, destroying what he finds or recruiting it into his growing army. He is empowered by the Abyss but unable to depart. Some Garou worry that he found the secret he desired and now waits for the Apocalypse to slay and consume Helios.

The Black Spiral Dancers of the Hive of the Jagged Maw worship Eater-of-Souls. These fanatics seek to maintain the purity of the Abyss and once worked under their priestess Grythyg before being pressed into Nightmaster's service. They despise the uncorrupted and hunt other Garou in the Abyss tirelessly.

Grythyg despises Nightmaster. His power is greater than hers and she burns with jealousy at his Abyssal favor and the loss of leadership of her Hive. For now she assists

Nightmaster's schemes but will take any opportunity to discover his weakness and destroy him.

Aetherial Realm

Above and beyond all other Near Realms lies the Aetherial Realm. It stretches from the Gauntlet over the Penumbra and above all other Near Realms to the borders of the Membrane. It is reflected in the physical world as the skies above that constantly cycle through night and day. The Aetherial Realm is the Umbral sky where Luna and Helios dance around each other and is home to the spirits of the planets and heroes of the constellations.

Although the Aetherial Realm stretches across all the sky to the margins of the Deep Umbra, it is also a discrete plane of existence in the Near Umbra. Finding the Realm is simple – the traveler only needs the means to head upwards and pass through one of the clouds in the sky. This works even in the Penumbra without needing to pass into the Near Umbra first. Additionally, all Moon Bridges pass through the Aetherial Realm at their peak and it is simple for a werewolf to step from the path and be in the Aetherial Realm.

A layer of clouds forms the 'ground' of the Aetherial Realm. They have a spongy top layer but are solid and easy to walk on. The clouds shift and flow to their own rhythms and form wondrous landscapes of plains, hills, valleys and mountains that all have the same spongy solidity. Birds, other flying creatures, and long-lost mythical beasts fly above the clouds. So too do aerial spirits of all kinds, including air elementals and weather spirits.

Garou territories are scattered through the Aetherial 'lands'. These are guarded as carefully as any caern in the physical world. The proximity of the Aetherial Realm to so many other places makes it a valuable staging point for Garou raids in the Umbra and the physical realm. The various septs that guard these places secure easy access between caerns and the Aetherial Realm, and from the Aetherial ground level to allied Anchorheads far in the sky above. They also provide a line of defense for the Aetherial spirits and denizens should anything break through the security stationed at Anchorheads on its way to the Near Umbra.

Leaving the Realm is even easier than arriving. Gaps open between the slowly drifting clouds; travelers find these easy to step through but nearly impossible to accidentally fall through. From here she falls out of the Aetherial Realm and into the Near Umbra. The Aetherial keeps the traveler safe through this fall. No matter the distance, she lands as if she had just jumped up from the ground. The drawback of using this exit is she has no control over where she will land. She may wind up anywhere in the Near Umbra –

including within other Near Realms, unless their own rules prevent such arrival, like Erebus or Flux.

Another means of leaving the Realm are the Moon Bridges. A werewolf may simply step onto any Moon Bridge he comes across and follow it to its end. He may even ask other travelers its destination if he happens to see them moving across its peak. A Garou with suitable Gifts may also create Moon Bridges of his own and use these to enter or depart the Realm.

Above the slowly shifting cloud landscape shines the Aetherial sky. Against a backdrop of blue so deep it is only a few shades away from midnight black, Luna's Aetherial presence hangs in the sky, brighter and larger than she ever appears in the physical world. Helios sits at the opposite end of the sky, more distant and fainter than he seems in the physical realm, for the Umbra is the domain of night and of Luna. Between these two Incarna shine the planets and stars. Each of the planets appears with crisp, constant visibility, while the stars and their constellations twinkle and dance like dazzling diamonds in the Aetherial sky.

Space Travel

Reaching celestial objects takes time — journeys may stretch out to weeks or months. This factor is rarely an impediment to the determined traveler and many Garou make it a point of pride to make the journey to the home of Luna's Aetherial Incarna. Visiting the heavens requires the traveler to have some means of flight.

The Moon

The time taken to travel to the moon is not absolute. The length of the journey depends on the traveler's ability to resist the coercion of guardian Lunes. When someone decides to travel to the moon her intent shines like a beacon to the Lunes. These spirits are not hostile but are charged with ensuring their mistress is not lightly disturbed. They will first order the traveler to turn back, appearing as immovable gatekeepers or intimidating guardians. If she ignores their demands they will eventually change tactic and offer her alternative paths that they say are faster and easier to travel. In truth, these Moon Bridges soon lead the traveler away to other parts of the Near Umbra. The Lunes are not particularly concerned with where these paths go, but usually try to offer those that do not lead to hostile environs, unless the traveler was unusually aggressive or offensive.

Overcoming the Lunes' manipulations and distractions requires ten successes on an extended Intelligence + Enigmas roll (difficulty 9). The character may make one roll per day to resist the Lunes but must achieve the required successes in no more than (Gnosis) days or she discovers that she has fallen victim to their tricks despite her best efforts and is hopelessly lost.

If she defeats the Lunes, the visitor arrives on solid ground in the realm of Sokhta, the lunar Incarna known to some as Phoebe.

The Sun

The Umbra does not belong to Helios; his light shines dimly within most of its reaches. This changes for those seeking the Aetherial sun. From the moment the traveler begins the journey her surroundings grow hotter and brighter, increasing the closer she comes to her goal but disappearing instantly if she abandons her journey.

Strangely, the journey to the Aetherial sun takes less time than reaching the moon. No more than a day passes before the visitor is challenged by fire elementals that erupt in golden flares of light and heat from the sun's surface. When undisturbed they are content to leap in twisting fiery arcs and splash back into the shifting surface, but when they sense an approach they tumble and dart into the visitor's path, forming a fiery gauntlet. Anyone who is determined to reach the Sun must subject themselves to the fire and push through this defense.

Though the elementals are not actually attacking the character, their touch still burns. Pushing through the gauntlet is resolved as five attacks, each with a dice pool of six dice. Successful 'attacks' cause three levels of aggravated damage that can be soaked at difficulty 9; creatures normally incapable of soaking fire damage are just as susceptible to these flames. The Storyteller decides if any armor or Gifts help mitigate this damage. As the sun's Incarna respects purity and strength the elementals follow his lead and don't press as hard with pure blooded Garou or those from the pure lands. Garou with the Pure Breed merit are only subject to four attacks, as are members of the Uktena and Wendigo tribes. Pure blooded members of these tribes only receive three attacks.

The Garou inflicts damage on herself by trying to push past the elementals. At any time during the ordeal she may step back and the attacks stop. This won't heal any damage she already sustained, but the elementals have no interest in seeing her dead.

If the traveler survives her ordeal she finds herself standing on the liquid fire surface of the sun. She still suffers from any wounds gained during the travel, but the surface is comfortably warm and harmless. The ground shifts and blazes with inner light but is solid enough to support her. Within this domain she may encounter a burning citadel of solid fire if the Incarna manifests as Hyperion, or as a tipi cloaked in pure white light if he chooses to appear as Katanka-Sonnak. The Incarna sometimes takes other forms and changes his buildings, but in any form he prizes valor and despises deceit. He appreciates travelers who stoically bear his elementals' burns. He rarely offers to heal the injuries — to do so would be an insult to the visitor. The

Incarna's strength, power and knowledge can be a valuable aid to the supplicant, but he is an exacting and intolerant spirit who is hard to please and quick to anger.

The Reaches

The domains of the lesser planets and their Incarna reside in the Aetherial Reaches between and beyond the moon and sun. Beyond these domains is the Membrane, through which the energies of the Triat have leaked through, with each casting a region of the Aetherial in its own image.

The **Weaver Reaches** are a crammed but neatly organized web of calcified reality. The web's intersecting nodes lock cold stars and frozen planets to an unnatural symmetry. Colossal Weaver spirits such as 'star spiders' patrol and maintain the web and ensure everything remains in its ordained place. They sometimes move the stasis-locked celestial objects to other positions in the network in accordance with unknowable patterns, forming strangely vectored constellations. Glass Walker Theurges have been known to study these constellations and claim that if properly deciphered they specifically define the Weaver's future plans.

The **Wyld Reaches** are a constantly shifting mélange of lights and sounds. Planets streak through the skies like comets, and stars perform in ways they should not; burning cold suns that freeze everything around them and others that push everything away with antigravity waves. Despite the maddeningly random laws of these Reaches they are a frequent destination for travelers seeking to move undetected to the Deep Umbra. Wyld passageways across the Membrane form frequently but are usually unstable, disappearing within a few hours or days after coming into existence. Passageways to other parts of reality form frequently and randomly. It is almost impossible to discern without actually using one if it will lead to a tribal homeland, the bottom of Malfeas, or behind a back-alley dumpster in physical reality.

The **Wyrms Reaches** are dark blotches against the otherwise star-filled sky. The stars here have burned-out to lifeless husks or collapsed into black holes. These singularities are dark Anchorheads that wrench at the body and soul of any traveler mad or desperate enough to use one, and usually terminate in Malfeas or another Wyrms-infested region. Interpreting these dark constellations of dead objects spells out dire omens and portents of destruction. Garou deciphering these predictions must be strong of spirit and pure of heart, for even the act of reading the constellations tears at their spirit and opens them to potential corruption.

Other Planets

The sun and moon aren't the only celestial objects in the Aetherial sky. Each of the planets and other bodies of the solar system has an Aetherial analogue. Visiting these places requires long journeys and overcoming tests of glory,

PLANETARY INCARNA

The Garou ascribe names and demeanors to the major Planetary Incarna as follows.

Mitanu, the trickster Rogue of Mercury;

Tambiyah, the fecund Veiled Mother of Venus;

Nerigal, the fierce Ice Warrior of Mars;

Rorg, the feral Many-Taloned Hunter of the asteroid belt;

Zarok, the kingly Crowned One of Jupiter;

Lu-Bat, the sagacious Peaceful Counselor of Saturn;

Ruatma, the enigmatic Shadowed One of Uranus;

Shantar, the pragmatic and inventive Loom Maker of Neptune;

Meros, the restless wander of Pluto.

honor and wisdom; the nature of the Incarna determines which trials are given the most weight. The domains of these Incarna tend to be amalgamated reflections of the physical planet, associations humans have given it, and the Incarna's personality.

Going Deeper

The Aetherial Realm holds more Anchorheads to the Deep Umbra than other place in the Near Umbra. Most of these are protected and maintained by packs of Garou elders and Ancestor Spirits. Some Garou from more prideful tribes, such as the Silver Fangs and Shadow Lords, say that the Garou Nation guards all Anchorheads and therefore knows the comings and goings of every traveler to the far realms. Some may believe this propaganda but other Umbral-exploring Fera know this is demonstrably false. These claims also don't explain the hunting packs of Black Spiral Dancers who terrorize the far-away places, who must have access to Anchorheads of their own or use other, darker means to slip through the cracks to into the Deep Umbra.

Arcadia Gateway

Dreams of Arcadia have haunted sleeping humans since before tales were told, but only a few deluded souls claim to have visited it. The Arcadia Gateway isn't the enchanted

land of the fae. Arcadia itself is too alien and ephemeral to survive within the Near Realms, but few deny that Arcadia Gateway has some connection to the homeland of the Fair Folk. Some insist that the Realm is a literal pathway leading to Arcadia — a palatial walkway cobbled with nightmares and flanked by topiaries sculpted into the shapes of love, beauty, and honor — if only the questing hero could find the door. Others believe that no such opening exists in the Gateway, but the Realm was once inhabited by the fae and therefore might hold clues to the true location of Arcadia. In either case, the Arcadia Gateway pulses with Wyld energy that even now creeps into humans while they sleep. The primordial dreams it inspires help slow the calcification and decay that the Weaver and Wyrms wreak on the collective unconscious of humanity. If events in the Realm radically change its nature or destroy it entirely, it would echo in the physical world, and that alone makes it of interest to the Garou.

The genesis of the Arcadia Gateway remains a mystery. In some stories, the fae lived on Earth many millennia ago when the world was young and full of hidden places and chaotic magic. In those days the Fair Folk took humans as lovers, hunted them for sport, and otherwise used them as playthings to suit the fairies' wicked temperaments and moods. Then humanity learned to forge iron and so became a threat to the fae. A few among the Fair Folk made war upon their former servants in hopes of subjugating them once more, but all their enchantments shattered against the cold iron and many found ignoble death at the hands of those they once casually tormented for their own amusement. Of the remaining fae, most went into hiding. They still played their games with mortals, but they did so either symbiotically and with the humans' permission or secretly and at the edges of civilization.

A third group of Fair Folk nobles, including some of the most powerful of all the fae, determined that they would not become shadows in the world they deserved to rule. If this world would no longer serve them they would create one that would. They left behind Earth with its unruly mortals and cold iron. They walked the spirit worlds for centuries in their quest. Such was their mystical power that their paths through the Umbra forged the trods that wind their way through every Realm. At last they opened a gateway beyond the Near Umbra and into the Deep Umbra, where they willed Arcadia into existence. Although they closed that gateway behind them, some of the faerie magic leaked into the Near Umbra, and the Arcadia Gateway formed like a bubble around it.

In other stories, the Fair Folk originated from Arcadia and came to Earth to search for new amusements. In these stories the Arcadia Gateway is either the place where the Fair Folk entered the Near Umbra, an outpost they created from which to observe Earth before their invasion, or both.

STORY SEED: QUEST FOR ARCADIA

A Fianna elder who claims to have discovered the entrance to Arcadia in the Realm disappears, leaving her notes behind, and the Elders order the pack to continue her research. The trail begins in the Arcadia Gateway snaking along a path through the lands of every season until it reaches its ultimate destination.

Where does it lead? A hidden chamber in the Summer Palace. Across the Ocean of Dreams. High in the mountains west of the Fortress of Winter. Some seemingly innocuous landmark at the heart of Arcadia Gateway.

What does the pack find there? The fabled gateway. A mere crack where the door once opened. An ancient ruin that holds clues to the true location of Arcadia in some other Realm. A powerful source of Wyld energies.

What happens next? Do the forces of the Seelie or Unseelie Court make war to control the opening to Arcadia? Does an army of Wyrmspawn lay siege to it in hopes of either corrupting Arcadia or locking it away so its Wyld energies can never again seep into the world? Will the Fair Folk grant the pack entrance to Arcadia — whether to retrieve the lost elder or seek help in the war against the Wyrms?

It is equally likely, however, that the Arcadia Gateway is merely a reflection of mortal dreams of the fae — an echo of the predations of the Fair Folk in the centuries before the discovery of iron that still aches in humanity's collective unconscious. As those ancestral memories fade, so too do the dreams that sustain this Realm and the connections through which its Wyld energies seep into humans.

Whatever the truth about its origin, the fae do not inhabit the Arcadia Gateway. A handful of stranded changelings who lost their way on a trod from Earth carve out homes for themselves here. The vast majority of the Realm's inhabitants are emanations who believe that they are fae, but know they cannot exist outside of the Arcadia Gateway. As more emanations learn that the Realm is collapsing around them, panic and despair spread through the Realm.

Seelie and Unseelie

The inhabitants of the Arcadia Gateway belong to one of two courts — the Seelie and the Unseelie. Each adheres to



its own code. The Seelie are honorable, never forget a debt, revere beauty in all its forms, and believe that love conquers all. The Unseelie emphasize passion, believe in enlightened self-interest, create change whenever and wherever possible, and insist that power is not power unless it is being used.

The Unseelie have a darker reputation, but the difference between Seelie and Unseelie is by no means as simple as “good vs. evil.” An Unseelie redcap might attack an outsider on a whim and without provocation, but a Seelie knight could also take offense at a breach in protocol and challenge the offender to a duel to preserve his own honor. Outsiders find Seelie laws largely incomprehensible, with punishments that often seem arbitrary and needlessly harsh. Because the Seelie regard punishment as a way for the criminal to restore her honor, appeals to a judge’s mercy or to extenuating circumstances inevitably fail. To these Fair Folk, any attempt to reduce punishment exhibits the accused’s contempt for that sacred virtue.

As well, members of both courts can take pranks and other mischief too far. The Seelie don’t usually stoop to outright murder, but accidents happen. Outsiders don’t usually have legal recourse unless a Seelie noble sponsors their case. Even then, the offender can often invoke obscure

legal loopholes or convince the judge that she acted in the defense of love, beauty, or honor, or to repay a sacred debt.

For as long as anyone can remember, Queen Marianna reigned over the Unseelie Court and Lord Lysander ruled over

STORY SEED: THE TRIAL

A friend or mentor stands accused of violating a law of Arcadia Gateway and sends word to the pack, begging for help clearing his name. Can the pack find evidence that their friend is innocent? Maybe they instead identify some loophole that prevents him from being found guilty, such as one that permits a trial by combat or other contest against his accuser — one for which the pack will stand as his champions. Or perhaps the key is to win the favor of a powerful Seelie noble with enough knowledge of Fair Folk law to ensure the case is thrown out.

STORY SEED: THE MISSING LORD

Lord Lysander's disappearance from the Arcadia Gateway corresponds with troubling events on Earth that indicate the Wyld is growing weaker. What happened to him will determine what the pack can do about it:

Faerie Sequester: Lysander is the only inhabitant of the Arcadia Gateway who is a fae noble. The Fair Folk have decided to withdraw into the Deep Umbra and leave Earth to its own fate. They have recalled Lord Lysander to Arcadia so that none of their kind is left behind when the gateway closes forever. Lysander disagrees with this decision and is trying to convince his fellow fae that Earth will soon be ripe for conquest. Does he truly wish to enslave humanity, or does he simply realize that Earth will lose much of its vitality if the Arcadia Gateway closes forever and so hopes to delay this as long as possible? What can the pack do to convince Arcadia's inhabitants that it is in their interests to leave the gateway open – or to open it even wider?

The Twisted Lord: Lord Lysander never left the Summer Palace. He refuses to grant audiences because a Wyrn taint has twisted his body and soul. Perhaps he fights the poison that courses through him, but unless something cures him it will eventually corrupt him beyond recovery – and with it all of the Arcadia Gateway. Possibly an envoy of the Wyrn has corrupted Lysander and he now engages in malevolent amusements instead of defending the lands he rules. Maybe an evil councilor aligned with the Wyrn's minions keeps Lysander prisoner in his own palace – whether with “cures” that keep the lord ill or lies that convince him that it is not safe to leave his chambers.

Imprisoned Lord: Lord Lysander's enemies kidnapped him. Perhaps members of the Unseelie Court infiltrated the Summer Palace and abducted him, or maybe it was agents of the Wyrn with designs on the Arcadia Gateway or fellow Seelie nobles jealous of Lysander's power. He might be held prisoner in the Fortress of Winter or in some other secret place in the Arcadia Gateway. If enemies from beyond the Realm kidnapped him, Lord Lysander's prison could lie anywhere in the Umbra, including a cold iron cell in Malfeas.

The Cold Queen: Contradictory rumors about Queen Marianna swirl throughout the Arcadia Gateway. Some say she has a new advisor – a disfigured wolf-man who fans her ambitions and feeds her paranoia. Others claim she hopes to replace Lord Lysander because she knows how to save the Realm from eternal winter, but the indolent, incompetent Seelie Council stands in her way. Some note her increasing interest in the events of Earth and surmise she hopes to find some way to conquer it. Others suspect she wishes to locate and open the door to Arcadia, which she believes Lord Lysander has hidden somewhere in the Summer Fiefs.

the Seelie Court. That changed with the sudden disappearance of Lysander a few years ago. The Seelie now struggle to maintain order in the Arcadia Gateway. Marianna's grip on her demesne and her subjects tightens daily. Meanwhile, the Council that appointed itself to rule in the missing lord's stead struggles daily just to convince the rest of the Seelie Court of their legitimacy.

A Winter's Tale

According to legend, the Fair Folk divided themselves into two courts and shared the world equally between them. The Seelie ruled in spring and summer, and the Unseelie held sway in autumn and winter. The Arcadian Gateway reflects this arrangement, but does so literally. The Palace of Summer stands near the eastern edge of the Realm, on the coast of the Ocean of Dreams. The Fortress of Winter marks the western edge of the Realm. Beyond it stretches the infinite mountain range known as the Dragons – a

harsh landscape that even the most dauntless of the Arcadia Gateway's inhabitants almost never dare climb. Spring and autumn divide the space between the two – with the Autumn Country in the north and the Springlands in the south.

At one time every season held an equal share of the Realm, but the land changes to reflect its denizens, and so that is no longer the case. Winter and Autumn have grown large in the years since Lysander's disappearance, and Spring and Summer have lost territory they had held for as long as the Arcadia Gateway has existed. Although this would seem like a wake-up call to the fragmented Seelie Court, not all the Fair Folk of Spring and Summer believe the threat is real. Even the Realm's inhabitants cannot map it by dead reckoning. Landmarks frequently move, or change shape seemingly at random. Only those Springlords and Landed Summer Gentry who have lost their fiefs to the encroaching Autumn and Winter feel the coming chill.

Atrocity Realm

This Realm reflects the taint of the Wyrms as few others do outside of Malfeas. Many Theurges believe the psychic residue of countless acts of brutality, torture, and degradation in the physical world created the Atrocity Realm. It is all nightmares given form. Even worse, all the horrific acts the Realm's emanations recreate reflect real events — from the massacres ordered by dictators to the personal torments of a single battered spouse. As creatures of half spirit, the atrocities perpetrated by shapeshifters stain this Realm even more than those of humans, and Garou who traveled here are often treated to exceptionally vivid scenes of the worst events of the Impergium.

The Realm is a foul-smelling wasteland of corpses and blood. Every step a traveler takes leaves a bloody footprint that quickly fills with wriggling maggots, and swarms of stinging flies assail outsiders like a thousand minute Furies sent to punish the guilty. The few structures are made of human corpses — mummified carcasses of mutilated victims arranged into walls held together with mortar made

PORTRAYING ATROCITY

The Atrocity Realm is full of disturbing images and events. As terrible as they are, child abuse, rape, torture, enslavement, and senseless slaughter all happen in the real world, and so the Atrocity Realm reflects them. Bringing these topics up in the context of a game can cause real problems for some players, who may feel that they'll hurt the group's fun if they mention their discomfort.

While this advice holds true for any nightmarish Realm, the Atrocity Realm is the most likely place for it to come up. Before running a story in the Atrocity Realm, the Storyteller should ask her players one question: Is there any subject you're not comfortable with the game touching on? If anyone says yes, listen to them and respect their wishes.

Using scenes to deliberately upset or offend people at the gaming table doesn't make a chronicle "edgy" or "mature." It's asshole behavior. A visit to the Atrocity Realm should scar the psyches of the characters who visit it, not those of the players at the table, and if even a "dialed down" version is too much it is best to leave the Realm out of the chronicle entirely.

STORY SEED: HAUNTED CAERN

Some years ago, a band of mages stole some of the power from a caern. The Garou retaliated by attacking the mages' stronghold with overwhelming force, but Rage got the better of them. In addition to killing the offending thieves, the shapeshifters slaughtered several uninvolved mages and dozens of humans who happened to work in the building where the mages had hidden their sanctum. The victims of the massacre became ghosts and now haunt the caern, making it impossible for the Garou to make use of it. The ghosts refuse to cooperate with any shapeshifter's attempts to put their souls to rest. The slaughter echoed in the Atrocity Realm, however, and there might be enough clues in the scene where their deaths took place to find a path to completing each of the ghosts' unfinished business.

from the ashes of those burned alive, decorated with the cracked and shattered skulls of those who died at the hands of their abusers. Mountains of corpses divide the Realm into an endless maze, and a fresh scene of atrocity greets travelers around every corner. Screams, moans, and choking sobs emanate from every direction, hinting at the horrors taking place there.

In some ways, the Atrocity Realm resembles the Battlefield, but it lacks the focus on struggle. Every victim in the Atrocity Realm is helpless and undeserving of the suffering visited upon him. Every victimizer is merciless if not downright sadistic. Bane larvae gather around every scene of torment, growing fat on the emotions of the emanations. The scenes in the Atrocity Realm are only reflections of events, however. Visitors who wish to end the suffering and carnage can interfere with a scene or even disrupt events before the atrocity takes place, but this is ultimately futile. Once the travelers leave, the victims and victimizers take their places again and the scene begins once more as if nothing had changed.

Some Garou claim a pack can exorcise an atrocity from the Realm by avenging or rectifying the victims' suffering in the material world — bringing the serial killer to justice, trying the dictator for war crimes, or forcing the abusive parent to acknowledge the wrongness of his actions. However, many believe such undertakings are unwise. They argue that in the time it takes to purge just one scene from the Atrocity Realm dozens more will spring up in its place. A

Garou can fight the Realm more effectively by preventing the horrors from taking place in the first place.

Although the ephemera of the Atrocity Realm are emanations like those of any other Realm, visitors can glean important information from the scenes of horror these shadow puppets reproduce. Events appear exactly as they did at the time of the atrocity, making it possible to investigate terrible crimes even if the perpetrator left behind no evidence that could point to her. A witness could also examine objects in the background of a scene. The visitor could study the relic that a victimizer stole from the room where he tortured and killed his victim. She could talk to eyewitnesses to the atrocity in order to learn something they knew about an unrelated topic or even rescue the victim long enough to question him about another event he remembers – if she can distract these shadow players from the horror in progress long enough to conduct such an interview. If an outsider interferes with a scene in this way, however, the Realm incorporates her into it in some way – usually as another of its potential victims.

Horror Show

The Realm harvests every atrocity one sentient being perpetrates upon another, and so it has assembled a virtually infinite palette of horrors. To make matters worse, the Atrocity Realm possesses an inherent awareness of the emotional triggers and psychological vulnerabilities of outsiders who come to it. Those repulsed by eye violence come upon many scenes that involve the stabbing, cutting, or gouging out of eyeballs, for example, and those driven to fury by violence against children can expect to see many atrocities involving the young as victims. Woe to the traveler who has personally committed an atrocity worthy of this Realm, for the Realm will confront him with his actions before he leaves. The Atrocity Realm knows how best to shock its visitors, however. It will never use the same horror often enough to inure the outsider to it, and it almost never presents a personal atrocity except as the climax to a carefully selected string of increasingly upsetting scenes of horror.

Getting to the Atrocity Realm is easy and often unintended, since it calls to emotions that fuel its abhorrent scenes. Shapeshifters who dwell on thoughts of rage, violence, or death might find themselves unwittingly entering the Realm, possibly taking the wrong branch of a Moon Path or stumbling through a gateway in another Realm. Such accidental visitors cannot escape by conventional means like Gifts or Moon Bridges. The Realm only releases a traveler who willingly dies at the hands of one of its victimizing emanations. He must take the role of a victim and accept all the agony of the atrocity without offering any resistance. The Atrocity Realm ejects travelers upon their “death,” sending them to another Realm or to the material world.

STORY SEED: CONFRONTATION THERAPY

A werewolf volunteered to undertake a pilgrimage to the Atrocity Realm after he committed a serious crime. Atonement and purification are worthwhile goals, but the Garou cannot afford to lose any of their kind permanently – even those who have committed serious crimes. The exile has knowledge or abilities the sept desperately needs to deal with a crisis, and the Elders sent the pack to locate him and help him complete his penance so he can return to the material world. What fate has befallen him? Has he found it impossible to face his crime after all, or has the Realm chosen to toy with him in order to extend his stay – tormenting him with countless horrors while denying him the one that will allow him to escape? Perhaps the Atrocity Realm has broken him such that he no longer believes he deserves to leave, or maybe the Wyrms has corrupted him.

If the visitor committed an atrocity with an echo in the Realm, he cannot leave the Atrocity Realm until he takes the role of his victim and dies at his own hands.

Some Garou send members of their septs who have committed heinous crimes to the Atrocity Realm as punishment. The idea is that they will be forced to confront the suffering they caused and hopefully gain wisdom from the experience. They can then return to the sept cleansed of sin and resolved never to inflict such suffering again. Those who cannot face their guilt will be trapped in the Atrocity Realm forever – a punishment as terrible as any Hell humans can conceive. Such forcible presentation of one’s sins sometimes drives the shapeshifter mad with guilt or compels them to shocking acts of self-flagellation. Others throw themselves into Bane pits where they go slowly mad, or they learn the wrong lesson about their deeds and turn to the service of the Wyrms.

Breeding Pits

If Banes arise from the pain and degradation of the innocent, the Atrocity Realm is a perfect breeding ground for them. Countless pits of writhing bodies and a slurry of human bodily fluids serve as spawning beds for Bane larvae. They take many forms, but the most common include maggots with human faces and homunculi made from instruments of violence or torture. Scrag and other Banes

guard the pits, protecting the larvae until the strongest are mature enough to cannibalize their weaker siblings and crawl out of the pits. Once free, the Banes seek out a scene within the Realm to fuel their growth further.

Unlike the emanations in the Atrocity Realm, the Banes can leave this place to spread the Realm's poison elsewhere. Visitors can attack them, although this is probably a bad idea given the sheer number of evil spirits that populate the Realm. If the Atrocity Banes successfully kill a Garou, their victim is mystically reborn in a Bane pit where various Banes torture him until he escapes, is rescued, or goes eternally mad.

The Atrocity Library

An edifice of black stone that resembles a mausoleum the size of a small city stands in one part of the Realm. The Banes tend to avoid this place and will not follow travelers through its entrance. The interior is a massive library of books bound in the flesh of those who committed atrocities worthy of the Realm — one victimizer per book — and the pages similarly consist of the flesh of their victims. The books have no titles or other identifying marks, and sit on the shelves in no logical order. Any literate visitor can read the books without difficulty as though they were written in her native language.

Some books are but a single sheet of macabre paper pressed between the covers. Others are thousands of pages long. Each describes every atrocity the victimizer committed in gruesome but clinical detail. It never uses names, instead referring to the victimizer as “the subject” and the victim as “the object.” Innocent bystanders are simply “a witness” or “witness #3.” This makes connecting an atrocity to a specific perpetrator difficult. Theoretically, a reader could identify a person by the specifics of her crime, but in practice atrocities throughout human history have a depressing sameness to them. Torture, abuse, rape, and murder are nothing new to the world, and even serial killers with calling cards have their copycats. Visitors cannot permanently destroy any of the books or remove them from the library.

The Atrocity Library may seem vast and empty, but it has inhabitants. Shapeshifters trapped in the Atrocity Realm often take refuge in it until they can work up the will to face the Realm's horrors once more. Outsiders sometimes come to the Realm on a specific mission, and the library makes a relatively safe base of operations. Occasionally a mage will come to the library to perform research for their magical arts. These tend to be the worst kind of willworkers, however. While some study sorcerous rituals that entail horrific acts of pain and degradation in order to fight those who performed them, more often they instead hope to reproduce the ritual.

The strangest inhabitants of the library are the Atrocity Librarians. These tall, humanoid creatures have enlarged

STORY SEED: THE ATROCITY LIBRARY

The elders of the sept need information that they can only find in the Atrocity Library, but they recognize that they will need a shapeshifter who has committed an atrocity in order to appease the Librarians. The pack must escort a rogue Garou chosen by the sept into the Atrocity Realm. They will need to face the Banes and other horrors there in order to reach the Atrocity Library. Their prisoner is uncooperative and refuses complete the mission. Meanwhile, several of his enemies have learned his destination and lie in wait to take their revenge on him while he is in the library. The pack must protect the rogue but also convince him to cooperate with them — preferably without adding themselves to the library either as the covers of books or as newly re-formed Librarians.

skulls and huge, black eyes. They can speak and understand any language and are the only ones who can navigate the labyrinth of shelves to locate specific books. They can't locate a victim or victimizer by name, but they can find the appropriate book if they have at least an ounce of the target's hair, flesh, or blood. They will not do so unless the patron already has a book or a page in the library. Otherwise, they feign cooperation but never produce the promised materials. If the visitor grows impatient or makes threats, the Librarians drop hints that committing some atrocity against another patron might expedite their search — which is, strictly speaking, absolutely true. As a result, the Atrocity Library sees occasional outbreaks of intense violence between the outsiders who take refuge in it. Those travelers who die at the hands of other outsiders while within the library re-form within it as Atrocity Librarians.

Battleground

The Battleground is the embodiment of war, struggle, and conflict. This Realm reflects every battle since Earth's prehistory, whether its warriors are professional soldiers, desperate rebels, or criminal gangs battling over turf in a large city. Emanations and spirits engage in continual battles that reflect past conflicts in the material world.

This chaotic and in many ways nightmarish Realm is a military historian's dream. Every battle of every war plays out here from its beginning to the end, and then it resets and replays in an infinite loop. An observer can take in a perfect

STORY SEED: BATTLE SIMULATOR

A small army of Banes recently destroyed a nearby sept, and the pack's elders are concerned that theirs might be next sept the Wyrms' agents target. They send the pack to the Battleground with a fetish that allows them simulate the Banes' attack on the pack's sept. This will hopefully help gauge the extent of the threat and learn probable enemy tactics.

As the pack tweaks the events to identify the best way to fight the Banes, they discover that agents of the Wyrms that have been spying on them to learn their tactics. The pack must prevent the enemy from receiving this military intelligence, which will involve a chasing the Wyrms' agents across the Battleground, fighting in history's battles every step of the way. If they succeed, they must still find some way of preventing the agents from escaping the Realm, since simply killing them will only send them safely out of the Battleground.

If they fail, they will need to reevaluate their tactics. The simulated Garou and Banes' forces do not know each other's battle plans, so to create an accurate simulation the pack must find some way of convincing both sides to accept the military intelligence as legitimate. The Banes the Realm models are unlikely to cooperate with the pack, especially if they have reason to believe it will somehow damage the Wyrms' interests in the material world. The pack's other option is to invent a clever stratagem that uses what the Bane army will know about the sept's tactics against the servants of the Wyrms.

re-recreation of a famous battle and discover details lost in the heat and anarchy of combat — every act of cowardice, every fatal mistake, every victory won by courage, cunning, or luck. As well, the battlefields frequently overlap, creating conflicts between forces that could never have met each other in war — ancient Aztecs and Egyptians, Crusaders and warriors of Three Kingdoms of China, or Vietnam era U.S. Marines and French musketeers versus Japanese samurai and modern day members of the Israeli Defense Force. The Battleground offers an infinite number of potential combinations. An outsider who is willing to put himself in harm's way can even interfere with the events of a battle in an effort to change its outcome, but these are purely thought

experiments and do not actually alter history — no more so than does a historical simulation strategy game.

One feature of the Realm remains constant and is the starting point of every visit to the Battleground: the Signpost. Its exact form varies from visitor to visitor. Some see it as a literal signpost with wooden arrows pointing down one of the two paths that lead deeper into the Realm. Others experience it as an Egyptian obelisk with hieroglyphics or as a touch-activated computer terminal or as a pair of gargoyles that tell the outsider which battles can be found along which road. Whatever the form, however, the road only leads in two directions. The Signpost's list of battles changes from visit to visit, and a battle that lay to the left on a previous visit may lay to the right the next. Some of the battles are inevitably famous conflicts familiar to anyone even remotely familiar with history, while a few are so obscure that even their participants would not call them by the name on the sign (or by any name at all). Shapeshifters with a high Rage quite often find their past battles listed on the Signpost.

The Two Roads

Travelers who remain on the road will eventually reach all the battles listed on the Signpost for the direction they chose — as well as several other actual or hypothetical battles that were not on the Signpost. That raging battle will not harm them so long as they stay on the road. Bullets and arrows whiz by harmlessly. Explosions shower the traveler in dirt, but the concussive force does not even throw her off-balance. The roads themselves change in accordance with the specific battle. A visitor might view a conflict in the Wild West from a dusty trail through the desert, or watch from a Roman road as Roman legions fight Germanic warriors. For naval battles, the road becomes an appropriate small vessel that is not involved in the conflict — a motorboat or dinghy.

The road's protection only lasts until the traveler steps off of it. Once the visitor does this, the path disappears for him and he is forced to participate in the battle until its end. Fellow travelers still on the road can drag him back to safety so long as they do not step off the road themselves. Visitors walking off the roads encounter wounded and dying soldiers and refugees, as well as able-bodied potential enemies and allies. Some werewolves, such as the Get of Fenris, come to the Battleground to revel in the thrill of its battles. Other Garou regard it as a good place to practice strategy and tactics — a way to test their wits and mettle against the greatest generals and warriors in history.

Should the pack continue along the road and ignore all the events at hand they will eventually discover another Signpost that lists "Retreat" as an option. This place takes many forms (a helicopter pad, a lifeboat, a dense forest

STORY SEED: JOINING BATTLES

Werewolves often join the conflicts in the Battleground. While some regard it almost as a kind of warrior's gymnasium, others join the battles with a serious purpose in mind.

Achilles' Heel: The pack comes to the Battleground to fight the spirit-emanation of a mighty foe they cannot yet defeat in the material world. They might use the Realm to replay one of their past fights with that enemy in hopes of spotting their tactical errors, or perhaps they study as many of the foe's battles as they can in order to learn his favored tactics. Even if they can defeat their nemesis in the Battleground simulation, however, that does not guarantee they will best him in a real battle. The cleverest warriors sometimes conceal their most effective tricks until they must use them, and this is especially true of a fighter who knows the Battleground might reveal his secret maneuvers to anyone with the patience to visit it.

The Challenge: Not every challenge between Garou involves a battle of fur and claws at the center of the sept. A rival challenges a member of the pack to a duel of honor in the Battleground. She may choose either the battle that will be used to settle the score or which side she will command in the battle her opponent chooses. In any case, her pack will be allowed to participate in the events, as will her opponent's pack. The general who brings her side victory wins the battle even if she doesn't survive to see the outcome.

Ancestral Battles: Many Garou feel a strong connection to their shapeshifter ancestors. Those with warrior forbearers sometimes come to Battleground to bond with them. Certain Fetishes allow an ancestor spirit to replace the spiritual emanation version of herself in any battle in which she participated, allowing her to fight alongside her descendants. In addition to the pleasure and increased closeness of the shared experience — possibly represented by raising the werewolf's rating in the Ancestors Background — the spirit can teach the shapeshifter the skills she possessed in life, so long as the Garou is able to practice them while a battle rages all around him.



untouched by the violence, etc.), but semi-solid mist clings to Retreat. Those ephemeral soldiers who flee into the mist disappear. Outsiders who leave the road and enter this mist exit the Realm, reappearing in the Near Umbra.

The Plain of the Apocalypse

Garou who travel to the Battleground eventually come to a vast, broken plain of alkali flats and sparse patches of grass that Theurges call the Plain of the Apocalypse. The Get of Fenris claim that the Garou will fight their final battle here, and the outcome will determine the fate of Gaia. Unlike the rest of the Battleground, no shrieks, explosions, or battle cries break the eerie silence of the Plain of the Apocalypse. After the chaos of the rest of the Realm, this place feels strange and uncomfortable, like all the gods of war are holding their breath, waiting for the general to give the order to attack.

Not long ago, even the battlefields that surrounded the Plain of the Apocalypse were also strangely quiet, but that is no longer the case. Three mighty forces now battle for supremacy at the edge of the plain where the Garou will fight in the Last Battle – the forces of Weaver, Wyrms, and Wyld. Each force jockey for tactically advantageous positions from which to enter the Plain of the Apocalypse, eager for even the smallest improvement in their likelihood of winning the battle for reality. These preliminary battles are so fierce that they often spill into other battlefields of the Battleground, or even onto the otherwise inviolate roads that pass through the Realm. Some of the Battleground's emanations have joined one or another of the three forces, fighting alongside the spirit-creatures.

The army of the Weaver primarily consists of a seething mass of drones and spidery spirits. Its soldiers embody military discipline and battlefield tactics. They build bases and bunkers, establish communications and perform reconnaissance, and spin fortifications and encampments out of metallic silk. They are no strangers to flanking maneuvers, feints, or other tactical movements on the battlefield. Although they attack the Wyld army when and where it makes strategic sense to do so, the Weaver's forces are intent upon defeating the Wyrms' army, which they regard as the real threat.

The army of the Wyrms is a vast force of Scrags and other Banes, led by reflections of the Maeljin Incarna themselves. They attack Wyld and Weaver without prejudice – or anyone else who comes within striking distance of the Plain of the Apocalypse – almost as if the Wyrms hopes to win the Last Battle before it has even begun.

The army of the Wyld is the smallest force. It is little more than an unruly mob of amorphous, chimerical spirits that randomly attack and retreat without thought for their fellows. Sometimes its soldiers turn on each other on a whim,

STORY SEED: THE PLAIN OF THE APOCALYPSE

One of the pack's brash young Get of Fenris friends has taken it into his head to join the Wyld's army in the Battleground despite the warnings of his elders about the futility of this course of action. The elders of the sept ask the pack to give the misguided youth a few days to see the truth for himself and then enter the epic battle themselves in order to bring him home safely.

After risking their sanity to rescue him from his fool's errand, the pack discovers their friend has not come around to the elders' point of view and he begs them to stay with him for a single sortie he is leading against the forces of the Wyrms. The objective of the attack is the capture of a powerful Garou fetish that its previous owner lost in Malfeas centuries ago, which has reemerged in the possession of a captain of one of the Wyrms' Bane companies. It is a worthy prize, but the danger is great, for although the emanations of the Realm cannot inflict lasting harm on visitors, the Bane captain is no mere ephemeral projection. If the pack is captured by the Wyrms' soldiers, the captain may well dispatch them personally or, even worse, send them to Malfeas in chains of silver.

Even if they succeed in their friend's mad plan, that still leaves the pack with their original mission incomplete. Do they successfully convince the Get to return to the sept with them, do they take extraordinary measures to force him to return home – possibly earning his lasting resentment – or do they abandon the task the elders assigned to them?

relishing the struggle as much as any of the Realm's other emanations. A few shapeshifters have joined the Wyld's army, evidently thinking to aid Gaia and her children on Earth by confronting the Wyrms here. The constant contact with the apocalyptic army's Wyld energies has driven them mad, and they are no more capable of ordered thought than are the other soldiers in the fray.

CyberRealm

Even the Weaver's playground struggles to keep up with human advancement. The CyberRealm is young by Umbral standards, dating back as far as technology became

LIQUID ASSETS

As the Weaver is as much about commerce as technology, the CyberRealm has its own deeply-ingrained currency. The currency, called “juice,” takes the form of liquefied Gnosis serving as literal fuel for machines or metaphorical fuel for spirits and shapeshifters.

Juice is the lifeblood of the Realm and its inhabitants. The most powerful entities in the CyberRealm have the most juice while on the street levels the denizens fight and barter and steal for what they can get. Because their own bodies contain Gnosis, visiting shapeshifters quickly learn that anything or anyone they’ll meet has plans to acquire that juice one way or another.

commonplace among humanity. It has always represented the peak of the Weaver’s influence, embodying the excesses and greatest potential of technology.

The CyberRealm’s growth surged during the Industrial Revolution along with the Scar. Where the Scar still embodies hungry, smoke-belching factories, the CyberRealm is a land of steel and glass and wires spun by the Weaver’s minions. The modern CyberRealm represents the Information Age, constantly growing in size and building shiny new structures and technology over incompatible, obsolete junk.

The CyberRealm is divided into three areas. The central area is Spider City, a three-tiered manifestation of future shock and urban existence in its purest form. Beneath that, the Pit’s tunnels contain all manner of discarded trash, refuse, and what’s left of used-up spirits and intruders. Far above, sprawling out against the backdrop of a flat gray sky, the Computer Web embodies data in spiritual form.

Entry and Exit

The CyberRealm is accessible through Moonlit Airts, but actually getting inside means getting past the realm’s Weaver-spirit guardians. Ananasi have a free pass, and can sometimes convince the guardians to let them bring guests.

Getting out is trickier. From the Micro Level, spending a Gnosis point at a juncture terminal allows for an Intelligence + Computer roll to get a shapeshifter into the Near Umbra (difficulty 8) or even the material world (difficulty 9). Rumors suggest paths out through the Pit, and some Weaver Constructs can smuggle shapeshifters out for a steep price. The Ratkin and some high-ranking Bone Gnawers

ID CARD

Level 1, Gnosis 3

This fetish ID card masks the bearer as an emanation of the CyberRealm, letting her pass as a native resident of the realm and potentially giving her access to restricted areas.

are rumored to have ways of getting in and out of the Pit. Ananasi still come and go, but smuggling their guests out might take more convincing.

The rare Banes in the Realm can lead travelers to pathways leading to or from the Scar — or even some darker realms for those willing to risk passing through those places.

Spider City

The city making up the bulk of the CyberRealm is a maze of concrete and plastic and glass laid out in a web pattern. Its towers stretch for miles, the windows reflecting rainbows of neon lights from lamps below and the Web above. From towers to shadowed alleys, the city is populated by Weaver-spirits of every breed and strength. Closer to street level, human-shaped emanations — human enough to be subject to the Delirium — flail against the uncaring system or milk it for whatever crumbs fall from the high tables.

Spider City is also traditionally home to technology born of ‘outdated’ science fiction and past dreams of what the future should have been. Hovercars and maglev trains slide along roads and tracks to carry citizens through the gleaming city’s clouds of neon light. Juice-fueled robots protect and clean the buildings but leave a pseudo-noir layer of grime. Secret labs all over the city constantly pump out cutting-edge gadgets and weapons that work better here than they ever would in the real world.

Uptown

The Pattern Web itself lights up the district of penthouses and high-rise lairs. Thick webs stuffed with Informational Geomids connect the towers, giving the rich and powerful Weaver-spirits that rule the CyberRealm access to all of the raw data they need. A small army of loyal spirits known as the Spider Patrol guard these levels as equal parts police and espionage force.

Most of the residents of this area are alien, emotionless Weaver-spirits. Some humanoid emanations work and dwell here as servants but a lucky few have proven themselves to the arachnid masters. Promotion to this level means not only permanent residence and a new job but also a new



physical form. The new resident's body is drained of juice and refilled with fresh, empowered juice — often harvested from unfortunates in Old Town — to reshape it to the Weaver's aesthetics.

Accessing Uptown through the towers requires getting past the Spider Patrol, either through stealth and guile or having an ID Card to gain proper clearance. At that point it's a matter of navigating the elevators and avoiding the guards. If an intruder is confident that he can dodge the hovercar and helicopter patrols outside, he can physically climb up the webbing hanging off the skyscrapers like ivy made of steel cable. In the past the Glass Walkers had full access to Uptown and were regular guests of the Weaver-spirits. Those relationships have soured over time and the tribe is now treated just like any other.

Downtown

The middle tier of Spider City is a monument to humanity's consumerist society. It's a well-lit and maintained bazaar of technological delights. Both the emanations and assorted Weaver-spirits work hard to organize information, distill it into juice, and upload it into the Computer Web with the help of ubiquitous computer terminals. Emanation and Spider alike work all they can in the hopes of earning not only a promotion, but also to afford the best

tech to impress the higher-ups. Downtown is a land where whomever has the best toys, wins.

This district is a populated with an uncountable number of malls, pubs, offices, kiosks, and talking vending machines where the residents buy whatever they can earn with the sweat of their brow. Robotic Weaver-spirits with mismatched parts called Weaver Constructs serve as merchants here, taking orders for anything an emanation wants if they can afford it. Almost anything can be found at one of these Constructs, if one knows where to ask. Requesting something dangerous like weaponry, information on a powerful Weaver-spirit, or access to Uptown, results in a refusal and a report to the Spider Patrol — unless the customer has enough juice to change the Construct's mind.

With the current state of Weaver-Garou relations, the inhabitants of Downtown are all too eager to report obvious shapeshifters to the authorities. Shapeshifters in Homid form with ID Cards can pass for native residents, and an Ananasi's Crawlerling swarm won't even draw a second glance. Any other shape draws the attention and wrath of the Weaver's minions.

Old Town

Web-sealed shafts and stairwells mark the borders between Old Town and Downtown and have done so for as

long as anyone can remember. Getting between the districts requires scaling the webs hanging off of the buildings. In addition to the obvious dangers, Weaver-spiders feel for the vibrations of intruders to keep the anarchist 'parasites' of Old Town from disturbing the Downtowners.

Old Town is rusty, decaying, and always seems on the verge of collapse. Any light the district receives comes from burning piles of garbage or discarded and repaired lamps from up top. It's a city-shaped junkyard of outmoded technology. Emanations shaped by fears of human obsolescence rage in the streets, fighting for their own freedom from the Spider Patrol's juice harvests or Banes that come in from the Scar in search of new prey.

Cyber Dogs who escaped the Glass Walkers' purge are big fish in this filthy pond. They lead a revolutionary faction of emanations and trapped shapeshifters in the ongoing struggle to survive and bring down the brutal lords of Uptown. They put their scavenging skills towards scrounging what functioning technology they can get and adapt it for their own use. This often includes physically melding it to their bodies as technofetishes, a process they can perform for visitors at a high price.

The Cyber Dogs are more than willing to help visiting shapeshifters, but the realities of their existence necessitate payment. Often this payment consists of a donation of temporary Gnosis transferred into juice. Just as often the Cyber Dogs request assistance in their battles against the Spider Patrol, especially if it puts Glass Walkers in danger.

The Pit

The tunnels underneath Old Town served as the original dumping ground for the CyberRealm's trash until it overflowed into the city above. Obsolete and often bizarre technology from every period of human history packs every corner of the Pit. Robotic golems — advanced by human standards but ancient here — lie in forgotten pieces next to Renaissance-era clockwork mechanisms. This labyrinth of technological refuse is lit by little more than the occasional fluorescent bulb and smells of battery acid and waste products.

The Pit is also where living trash winds up. Broken, wounded, or just plain faulty Weaver-spirits end up here, as do trapped Umbral travelers. Such unfortunates wind up as the next meal for scavengers after their juice, like sucking marrow from a bone. As in Old Town, Banes find their own meals in the Pit.

The Pit has its own native life, of a sort. Strange spirits made up of flesh, plastic, and steel crawl up out of the wreckage. They wander aimlessly like Frankenstein's monsters with twisted iron support beams for limbs and melted plastic faces opening to reveal teeth of jagged, mismatched glass. They have nerves of burned-out wires and

scraps of steel wool controlling muscles of rotted leather and chain link. Nobody knows if some energy in the Pit animates these monstrous hybrids or if some maddened Weaver-spirit is building its own followers.

The Computer Web

The Computer Web stretches high over Spider City, high enough that the sky above looks like flickering static rather than the flat gray seen from below. The Computer Web is a spiritual reflection of the Internet, carrying data from every computer on Earth at some point or another. It appears like a giant, glowing spider web, holding globular nodes embodying data clusters. Each node contains a miniature electronic world all its own, and the strands represent the connections between computers.

Getting into the Web is relatively easy. Plugging a fetish computer into a Downtown terminal and rolling Intelligence + Computer (difficulty 6) can get someone to the Macro Level, as can touching a computer screen and making a difficulty 4 Gnosis roll. Technofetishes made with Informational Geomids offer access via *any* computer. Finally, a shapeshifter can climb the right strands of web to reach the Computer Web. Leaving the Macro Level means taking a special exit strand off the web or willing oneself out at the original entry point.

The Computer Web is divided up into the Macro and Micro Levels. The Macro Level is the actual structure of the Web where Geomids and net-spiders manage data along the lines. Shapeshifters move across the Macro Level by standing on a strand, visualizing their destination, and making a Willpower roll (difficulty 6). (Further rules for navigating the Web can be found on p. 330 of **W20**) Success instantly carries the shapeshifter where she wants to go. Ananasi, naturally attuned to the workings of the Weaver, can travel without need of a roll.

The Macro Level is studded with nodes of various sizes. Each node has a juncture terminal that allows access to the Micro Level with a Willpower roll (difficulty 6). Inside the Micro Level the shapeshifter must contend with Weaver-spirits called daemons that keep out anyone without proper pass codes, though some nodes are freely open to Downtown residents for recreation purposes.

Each cluster on the Micro Level is its own mini-realm shaped by the files represented there; someone's saved game file is going to look a lot different from a realm of child pornography. A company's secret files might take the form of physical filing cabinets easier to crack open than computer security in the material world. Data can be reshaped and altered by destroying or defacing physical representations of files. Information deleted from the mundane Internet can sometimes be found in a dusty, abandoned backup node.

Erebus

Erebus occupies a unique niche in the spirituality of the Garou. It is the embodiment of Gaia's wrath and the purgatory of the Nation; a place both feared and revered for the punishment and purification that can be found here. When a Garou feels shame or guilt that she can't purge any other way she may find herself drawn to Erebus for cleansing. Even the worst of the Wyrms' taint can be burned away by the rivers of molten silver flowing through the realm. The liquid metal burns at the body while the personal attentions of Charyss' Crinos-formed Brood work to purify the spirit. These tormentors have centuries of experience in the arts of castigation, and are ideally suited to their task.

The purification process is excruciating to the body and soul. It brings the Garou to the point of death but refuses to allow her that respite. Though the suffering is immense and should be maddening, Erebus is a place of healing. The pain brings with it a sense of clarity through which the werewolf can recall and experience her sins even with every nerve on fire.

Arrival

A three-headed, black-and-silver wolf called Cerberus greets all arrivals to Erebus' borders. Cerberus decides who may enter the Realm and for what purpose. He interrogates her purpose; if Cerberus accepts her sincerity she may take the silver path behind the guardian. If Cerberus doubts her intentions he instructs her to turn and walk back into the Umbra. If she chooses to defy Cerberus and somehow overpowers or evades the guardian she discovers this easy exit has now closed, and the only way from the Realm is found on the island at its heart.

Cerberus is not infallible but he is difficult to deceive. Someone attempting to hide his intentions must succeed at a Manipulation + Subterfuge roll, difficulty 9. If Cerberus detects a lie he may still permit the traveler to continue, but he will inform the Brood this interloper requires penance. Despite what the deceiver may have planned, he will probably find himself forcibly thrown into the waters for punishment and the absolution of his sin.

A Landscape of Atonement

Beyond the silver path the visitor sees a dark realm, a vast plain of jagged black rock that stretches almost to the horizon. The vista is only broken by the large pools of molten silver that dot the landscape. This silver gives of a cool, unearthly glow that provides most of what little light is in this Realm.

The silver pathway soon spills out onto the jagged rock where Charyss' Brood awaits; towering Crinos of silver or black, with

CERBERUS, GUARDIAN OF ATONEMENT

Willpower: 8, Rage: 7, Gnosis: 9, Essence: 24

Charms: Armor, Blast*, Tracking

* Cerberus' Blast spews forth the same molten silver that flows through the Realm. This inflicts aggravated damage to werewolves in any form, and to other creatures vulnerable to silver in applicable forms. It causes lethal damage to other targets. The liquid metal causes agony to Garou but cannot kill its target nor render her unconscious. At the Storyteller's discretion it may give the target a moment of clarity to consider her actions and break off her attack. Cerberus has long experience of this effect and recognizes it instantly. If this occurs he will give the victim a chance to cease and apologize.

Roleplaying Notes: Cerberus may be related to the classic hound of Greek and Roman mythology, or he may have taken the name and appearance from those myths. Cerberus has never confirmed either way but finds tales from this period interesting and enjoys discussing them, if the right opportunity arises.

Cerberus has no desire to fight but takes his gatekeeper duty seriously. He is considered in his tone and will answer genuine questions a potential penitent may have. He is not an expert on the purification rituals and will refer these questions to the Brood, if he allows the supplicant entry to the Realm. If he is forced into conflict he tries to end the fight quickly, and preferably without loss of life.

soft voices that carry in the stillness. The cold light of the pools exaggerates the quiet intimidation of the brood by obscuring the movements and stance of the silver Crinos, and rendering the black caretakers almost shadowlike and invisible.

The Brood members stand beside the swirling pools of molten silver. They are willing to somberly discuss the needs of the visitors and make recommendations for penance, but they will not be drawn on how long the cleansing will take. Each werewolf's punishment is his own; the Realm and her conscience decides when she is whole, not the Brood.

The Brood marks a Garou requesting punishment by using a talon to carve a sigil into her flesh. She is then invited to step into the pool of silver. The Brood respects those who voluntarily enter their torment, but they will

assist reluctant penitents. From the first touch of the silver the Garou's flesh burns and every nerve ignites in agony. She thrashes about and may instinctively shift between forms in an attempt to climb out of the pool, but there is no escape from punishment. The waters swiftly drag her downwards and into one of the nightmarish black tunnels that snakes its way through the rock.

Within the rock is a labyrinthine mass of slick-walled caves that twist through a seemingly infinite layer of deep black shale. Through these caves the mercury-like rivers of molten silver flow and ultimately spill out to a dizzyingly high waterfall that tumbles into a vast lake at the nadir of the realm. Within the lake other Garou thrash about in agony, sentenced to suffer in the liquid metal until their spirits are cleansed of taint and sin. The currents move the werewolves towards the vast island at the center of the lake, where more Brood wait patiently for sufferers to emerge exhausted and pure.

A black fortress dominates the central island, standing high above the shoreline. It is carved from the same dark shale that makes up the rest of the realm. Silver-flaming braziers cast a strange, cool light not unlike Luna's own moonlight upon the walls of the fortress. Deep within its walls dwells the Incarna Charyss, who oversees all the cleansings that occur in her realm.

Visitors sometimes come to Erebus to entreat with Charyss or the lesser residents of her Realm. These emissaries, if permitted entry by Cerberus, may descend the cliff via rough-hewn stairs in the cliff face. More of the Brood waits with rafts at the bottom of the rock to carry these guests across the lake. These rafts are sturdier than they appear; the rise and fall of the silvery water does not rock them and the splashing of the liquid does not wet the occupants. It is difficult to accidentally fall from the raft but it can happen, particularly if the rider harbors guilt and sin that would be better treated in the waters than above them.

Purification

Charyss and her servants understand that physical suffering is only part of the journey to healing. Contemplation, repentance and acceptance are key lessons that need to be learned. The burning torment of the silver liquid is a visible and confronting element of purification, but is only part of the healing process. Unknown to most visitors to Erebus, Charyss' Brood does more than police the waters. Other servants work behind the scenes, directly interacting with the Garou's tortured psyche to aid healing.

Hidden deep within Charyss' fortress are the halls of the Harrowers and Castigators. The sigil carved onto the Garou creates a mystical link with the silver mirrors that line their walls. The laws of Erebus give access to a werewolf's body, mind and soul while she is submerged in the silver waters,

STORY SEED: BROOD DUTY

Garou sometimes volunteer to join Charyss' Brood. Some werewolves serve as payment for their purification. For others, helping others is part of their own healing – through this they cure their lingering pain and gain understanding of themselves.

Charyss meets with everyone who offers their service. She rejects some as their motives are impure. Others, she turns away because they are ill-suited to the task. She judges some to be better served by being tossed into the waters. She decides some are acceptable and takes them into the ranks of the Brood.

Charyss has millennia of experience in matching a new Brood member's skills and needs with the roles. She assigns most to assist Cerberus in guarding the borders of the Realm, or to watch the shores for emerging penitents. She recognizes a certain quality in a few who she inducts directly into the fortress to be trained in the arts of harrowing or castigation.

The Incarna shapes the outer forms of all new Brood to the towering silver or black Crinos regardless of the role she assigns them. Charyss returns their original shape when their service comes to an end, but the Brood form prevents them from leaving Erebus.

and these mirrors are the gateways. These psychopomps wear robes over their Crinos forms – blood red for Harrowers and white for Castigators. They work in pairs to step through the mirrors and into each sufferer's mind. Here they work to seek out the sources of guilt, force the Garou to confront each and acknowledge her failure, and then purge her of sin.

The Unforgivable

One of the greatest secrets of the Realm is that a Black Spiral Dancer swirls somewhere in the silver sea. The liquid metal slowly burns away the Wyrms' hold on him. A hand-picked pack of Brood carefully monitors his progress and ensures the ritual is administered precisely. They report any changes to his status immediately. Charyss' most skilled servants work tirelessly within his mind to uncover every last crime against Gaia.

So far the Dancer has endured unending tortures for more than a decade and no one knows how much longer the process may take. Charyss isn't even sure if he can be

saved or if the lake will claim its first fatality. She hopes for purification but quietly believes one less Dancer is not a poor outcome.

The currents of the lake are now bringing him closer to the shore but this is not the first time he has drifted in before being dragged out again by the tides. Maybe this time he will be able to climb from the shores, born anew in Gaia's eyes. No one knows what he will be if and when he does emerge. Could he be the first of a new White Howler tribe, or something else entirely?

The Changing Breeds

Erebus is only for the purification of Garou, but some wonder if Gaia's other shapeshifters have minor Realms hidden in the Near Umbra where their sins are burned away? They may be surprised to learn the answer is no.

Most other Breeds don't have the same freedom of Umbral movement the Garou enjoy. Apart from the Corax and Nuwisha, most Fera spend little time in the Umbra and are much more focused on the physical world. Also, the Fera populations are too small to waste time with regrets. The Breeds view the Garou as too self-important and willing to indulge in self-pity. In the eyes of the Fera, the Garou are Gaia's warriors and have a war to fight. The wolves may be suffering but they brought it upon themselves when they slaughtered their cousins; the time for wallowing in self-imposed torment to feel better about their mistakes has gone.

The Breeds have very different outlooks to the Garou. The Corax and Nuwisha don't feel they have anything to atone for and the Ratkin don't live with regrets. The Bastet are confident that even their mistakes have meaning, the Mokolé meditate and relive memories of sin to learn from them and the Ajaba are too focused on survival. The Ananasi have purpose instead of sorrow, the Gurahl are too few to have the luxury of penance, and the Nagah triumvirates provide support and chastisement in equal measure for each other.

Those Fera who know of Erebus just see it as another reason why the Apocalypse is fast approaching, and why the Garou are



partly responsible. Some Fera still believe other atonement realms exist. They swap rumors of Corax hanging in white-hot golden cages from a great tree, or Mokolé burning in waterless deserts as shrapnel-filled winds tear at their flesh. These stories have no basis in fact, but that doesn't stop some explorers from trying to find them.

The Flux Realm

In ancient times, matter and spirit were one, and the domains of the Wyld permeated the Gaia Realm. The laws of reality were more fluid, and those with the spiritual strength could command time and space, energy and matter simply by stretching out with the force of their will. Such radical reshaping is no longer possible in the material world, but the Wyld still rules supreme within the Flux Realm. It is a place of chaos, constant change, and infinite possibility. In spite of this, the Realm is much diminished from its former glory. The minions of the Weaver have spent centuries wrapping the Flux Realm in their orderly threads, creating an eggshell-thin layer of stability around the vast chaos of the Wyld that rages within.

Outsiders find the Realm extremely disorienting. It has no fixed landmarks and is in a constant state of transformation. Vast cities appear in the blink of an eye and vanish just as quickly. Mountains rise and fall, deserts become jungles, seas stretch from horizon to horizon and then shrink to mere ponds all in the space of a few hours – or in some cases, mere seconds.

The ordinary laws of nature don't apply to the way these landscapes behave even while they exist. Sometimes water burns or mountains fly. Wyldstorms howl through the Realm, transforming everything in their path. The sun burns blue or red or black, and the stars and constellations dance and whirl in the sky or vanish entirely. Luna wields great power in the Flux Realm, but sometimes more moons join her. These alien satellites obey no astronomical laws. Some travel west to east, or north to south, or remain motionless just above the horizon. Time is not a constant here, either. A day can last weeks or end in the blink of an eye. A traveler can arrive in the Realm today and return home a week ago.

The Realm's inhabitants are no less strange than its environs. Wyld spirits and members of Bygone species that can no longer exist in the material world are among the most ordinary of these. The Chimerae, dragons, Great Beasts, and other monsters that rampage across the landscape may be unpredictable opponents whose shapes change every few heartbeats, but at least outsiders can recognize them as living things or ephemeral projections of living things. Talking stones, hyper-intelligent clouds, and hostile glaciers are considerably more disconcerting to the average traveler.

The Flux Realm is hideously dangerous for non-shapeshifter travelers. The Wyld energies transform visitors into new shapes as surely as they alter the native inhabitants. While no metamorphosis in the Flux Realm is instantly fatal, being trapped in the body of a giant cockroach or transformed into a pool of quicksilver makes survival outside of the Realm highly unlikely. At the very least, it will prove a life-altering event. Garou and other shapeshifters who visit the Flux Realm might find themselves in bodies not their own, but as creatures of the Wyld these transformations are merely a temporary inconvenience.

Portraying Flux

It is at once easy and difficult for a Storyteller to capture the sense of chaos that defines the Flux Realm. If a story set in the Realm seems carefully planned to her players, it doesn't feel like the weird chaos one would expect from the Realm of "constant change and infinite possibility." If the Storyteller gets too carried away with coming up with random events and creatures for the pack to encounter, however, it ceases to feel like a story. Every journey into the Flux Realm should have some purpose to it, and it is important that the pack and Storyteller not lose track of that purpose. However, the actual path to that destination should also make it clear that these are alien landscapes that do not follow the rules of the material world. Here is a shortcut:

The Storyteller should decide how difficult it will be for the pack to achieve its stated goal in entering the Flux Realm. This complexity rating might be one for a brief peek into the chaos to throw a pursuer off their trail or climb. It might climb to six or more for something like traveling a year back in time while simultaneously forging a Wyld-imbued klaive that will instantly kill the powerful Bane that killed their mentor. Virtually anything is possible in the Flux Realm, but some feats are easier to achieve than others.

The Storyteller should then multiply the complexity of the task by the size of the pack to determine the number of successful Wits + Enigmas rolls – not successes – the pack's members must make in order to achieve that objective. A pack of four shapeshifters who set out to accomplish a task with a complexity rating of three would require twelve successful rolls.

The Storyteller then sets the first scene by whatever means suits her style. She might have several weird scenarios carefully built ahead of time, or she might trust to her improvisational abilities. In the second case, some form of random input generator might prove helpful – clicking Random Article in Wikipedia a couple times and cobbling together a scene based on what comes out, for example, or scattering all the books and DVDs in the living room on the floor and throwing handfuls of pennies to determine which two or three of them will serve as the basis for the

next scene. Not only does random input give improvisation a foundation to build upon, but it tends to create an atmosphere of chaos at the gaming table.

Each scene should involve some threat, conflict, or challenge. The members of the pack must navigate the scene successfully using any number of skills or Gifts at their disposal. Trying to direct a sky-shark might require Dexterity + Animal Ken rolls, while the epic trivia contest against the bovine trivia champion could demand Intelligence + Academics rolls. The Storyteller shouldn't limit the characters to a single option. If they invent a clever way of resolving the scene's conflict to their advantage, the Storyteller should let them roll something appropriate.

Each member of the pack who succeeds in the scene may make a Wits + Enigmas roll (difficulty 8) to make progress on the pack's overall goal. Members of the pack who fail in the scene do not make this roll and may suffer an additional handicap in the next scene, at the Storyteller's discretion. If all the members of the pack fail in a single scene, or if one of them botches on the Wits + Enigmas roll, the pack loses all accumulated successes and suffers some major complication in addition to being forced to start over on the intended task.

The Storyteller then creates a new scene and handles it the same way. This continues until the pack has accumulated the necessary number of successes to accomplish their aim or gives up.

The Cocoon

The Flux Realm is a domain of the Wyld and therefore accessible from any Moon Path. Spirits of the Weaver have spun a vast cocoon of Pattern Web around the Realm, making it more difficult to reach than it once was. The Cocoon is a vast, three-dimensional labyrinth guarded by Pattern Spiders and other Weaver spirits. Its proximity to the chaotic fury at the heart of the Flux Realm causes this maze's exact form to change with every visit. Sometimes it is the classic Greek labyrinth, complete with minotaurs. Other times it is a vast jungle inhabited by panthers and leopards, or a seemingly infinite museum guarded by elaborate security systems, or an ancient crypt defended by the unquiet dead.

Travelers must penetrate the Cocoon in order to enter the Flux Realm. Finding a path through the labyrinth requires an Intelligence + Enigmas roll (difficulty 9). Once a shapeshifter has identified a route through the Cocoon he must still overcome the obstacles that stand in his way. To maintain a clear connection to his destination he must calibrate his spirit. This requires a Gnosis roll (difficulty 9). Failure on this Gnosis roll attracts the attention of the Weaver's servants, which attack the intruders at critical moments during their journey through the labyrinth.

Once the visitor has locked onto the Wyld energies with her Gnosis, she cannot lose her way in the labyrinth. The Cocoon however manifests obstacles in the intruder's path to prevent her from entering the Flux Realm's heart. Barriers, elaborate traps, complicated puzzles, and hazardous environments spring up before her, and she must overcome each one before she can continue toward her destination. Attacks by Weaver spirits further complicate the most difficult of these challenges. Once the traveler overcomes (7-half her Gnosis, rounded up) challenges, she successfully penetrates the Cocoon and enters the heart of the Flux Realm.

Weaver spirits cannot survive within the Realm itself and so seldom pursue intruders beyond the inner boundary of the Cocoon. The Wyld energies tear apart any Weaver spirits that stray into the chaos.

The Coil

The most powerful inhabitant of the Realm is a Wyld Incarna known as the Coil. This ancient being never appears in the same form twice as it plays and cavorts in the most chaotic manifestations of the Flux Realm's maelstroms. The Coil wields almost absolute power over the Realm, laughing as it creates temporary bubbles of perfect calm or whips the mountains into a frenzy of volcanic fury. Some Theurges speculate that the Coil has transcended its spirit nature to become a fragment of the Wyld itself, akin to one of the heads of the Triatic Wyrms.

Visitors to the Flux Realm seldom encounter the Coil, and those who do so and survive shudder when they look back on the experience. The Realm may be chaos made manifest, but the Coil is an *intelligent* manifestation of chaos — one that enjoys playing games with outsiders who wander into its domain. It plays with its prey like a cat with a mouse, transforming the landscape and visiting bizarre manifestations on intruders just to see how they'll respond.

The Coil's favorite trick is to convince a visitor that she has escaped the Flux Realm by sealing her in a bubble of temporary order that looks like a familiar place. The victim might spend days or weeks in the pocket of order before she notices something that doesn't jive with the way things should be — a friend with the wrong name, a building that wasn't there before, a Moon Bridge that returns the traveler to his point of origin. Once this happens, the chaos reasserts itself, and the wanderer discovers he has never left the Flux Realm. What's worse, the Coil often chooses to do this several times until the visitor spends the rest of his life a little wary of change — always afraid that anything unexpected might herald a rapid collapse into the chaotic reality of the Flux Realm.

The Coil appears to recognize the spark of the Wyld in shapeshifters and is less likely to toy with them — unless

THE COIL'S FAVOR

If the pack has the (mis)fortune to encounter the Coil when they are on a quest within the Flux Realm and musters the audacity to request a boon from the spirit, handle it as a Flux Realm scene as normal, but the Wits + Enigmas roll after succeeding in the scene is at difficulty 9 instead of difficulty 8. However, each such successful Wits + Enigmas roll counts as two successes for the purpose of completing the pack's goal rather than one.

they somehow anger it or it happens to be in a particularly playful mood. In fact, the Incarna frequently shows favor to those shapeshifters who beg a boon from it and will grant their requests with a cheerful, helpful attitude. Asking a favor from the Coil is incredibly dangerous, however. The way it grants wishes often creates as many problems as it solves. This is not out any malevolence on the part of the spirit. The Coil simply does not understand that other creatures can't simply reverse any unintended consequences its boons might have. While they may not have the variety of power that the Coil has, it cannot comprehend creatures that do not have control of reality in some fashion. A request to bless a klaive so it can defeat a powerful Bane might result in a weapon that, quite incidentally, tears small holes in the fabric of time and space whenever it is used—through which monsters and hostile spirits slip into the world to wreak havoc.

The Legendary Realm

Shapeshifters exert significant influence over the Umbra as a consequence of their half-spirit natures, and the Legendary Realm is a manifestation of their songs and stories of the past deeds, great heroes, and epic battles of their kind. It is a place of myth and allegory where great heroes live on, guarding the people from barbarians and monsters. Noble figures from the tales of the Silver Record sit atop thrones of millennia ago, and the mightiest fallen heroes appear in this Elysian land where they await the Last Battle.

In recent days, however, the Realm has fallen under a shadow. Where once stood a prosperous kingdom, the Midnight Land has come from Malfestas to bring ruin to the Realm's people. Though the Legendary Realm is home to

some of the Changing Breeds' greatest heroes, the legions of the enemy are vast and insidious enough to challenge even the Silver Record's legendary scions.

The Kingdoms

The Legendary Realm has many kingdoms, each of which is ruled by one or more shapeshifter heroes from myth. Each ruler is anointed by Gaia Herself only after they perform great deeds that find their way into story and song and then pass all manner of grueling ordeals and trials. Once crowned by Gaia, the new ruler's land flourishes to mark the beginning of his reign. The trees put forth leaves and flowers. The fields present full-ripened grain ready for harvest.

The landscapes and inhabitants of a kingdom reflect the qualities of its rulers. One ruled by a courageous Get of Fenris might be a land of valiant but headstrong warriors, while one ruled by a Black Fury may feature many small clans, each led by a wise and strong matriarch. A queen notable for her pragmatism and skill at arms might rule from a great stone castle with high, thick walls and deep moat, while a king famed for his love of beauty and devotion to Luna may occupy a magnificent palace with songs to the Moon engraved in the walls and gilt with gold leaf.

Wylderness

The Wylderness occupies the spaces between the kingdoms. Monsters from myth and legend roam its ever-shifting landscape and guard the enchanted places and magnificent treasures the Wylderness hides. The dangers travelers face here are often allegorical. A dragon resting on a pile of gold might represent either the fear or greed of she who encounters it, while a battle with her reflection or shadow might indicate that she must overcome her pride, face her guilt, or make a choice she has already put off for too long. Each trial tests the true measure of a warrior—Garou expect each other to be wise and honorable as well as valorous, and such traits can greatly aid him in facing these perils.

STORY SEED: THE KINGDOMS AND THE WYLDERNESS

The pack seeks the services of a great queen in the Legendary Realm. Before she will grant her aid she demands that they prove themselves by hunting down a nearly invulnerable chimera and bringing its head back to her castle. As it turns out, the creature is invulnerable but intelligent, and it can't be goaded, bribed, or tricked into following the pack back to the queen's castle.

The Midnight Land

Not all legends end well for their heroes. The tales and songs of the Garou have grown darker as the Apocalypse approaches, and as it has done so, so too has the Realm that remembers the glory of the shapeshifters' past deeds. As the Wyrms' servants defeat the Garou in the physical world, these catastrophes echo in the Legendary Realm, allowing a fragment of Malfeas to slip in. Some Get of Fenris whisper that this is possible not because of the defeats themselves but because of the commemoration of those defeats in the Silver Record. They argue that only those Garou who achieve victory deserve to be remembered in story and song, a controversial position that especially infuriates Galliards.

Once a fertile kingdom, the region now known as the Midnight Land has since withered into a stony desert under a black, ash-choked sky. The pale shapes of dead trees and the skeletons of the land's former inhabitants and their beasts stand as mute testament to the vitality of the kingdom that the Wyrms' influence drained out of the land. At the center of the Midnight Lands rises a great castle of opaque obsidian — a projection of Malfeas itself — a fortress of sharp edges and deadly points ruled over by avatars of the Maeljin. What local Banes call the Third City surrounds this castle. Undead creatures haunt the crumbling buildings and wander the streets, tormenting any prisoners the Banes bring back to this grim municipality. The city has a ghastly, gargoyle-covered wall with tower roosts from which flights of Banes scout the lands across the Wylderness.

The people of the Legendary Realm fear that the Midnight Land will be the staging ground for an assault on the Realm. The scattered heroes of the land may unite under the werewolves rallying them, but even they might not be able to withstand the power of the Maeljin for long.

STORY SEED: THE MIDNIGHT LAND

Whether to prove their worthiness to a lord of the Realm or at the bequest of the elders of their sept, the pack infiltrates the Midnight Land in order to discover what the Maeljin plot. They must survive in this land of Banes and undead long enough to retrieve vital intelligence and escape the Midnight Land with it. If they keep their ears up they might also learn of an opportunity to disrupt one of Malfeas' plots against the Legendary Realm.

STORY SEED: THE FIMBULWINTER

The pack must attempt to reach the kingdom of a great Silver Fang warrior from the past. When they reach her kingdom, however, they discover it is locked in the ice of Fimbulwinter. To free the kingdom, the pack must defeat the lord of the ice giants who now rules it and force him to cede his throne to the rightful queen. If they successfully engage the giant lord in a diplomatic dialogue they might even learn something about the cause of the Fimbulwinter and the interests of the ice giants who conquer each frozen kingdom.

The Fimbulwinter

A strange, worrying phenomenon has gripped the Legendary Realm in recent years. One by one the kingdoms descend into a deep winter. Rain becomes sleet, which becomes heavy, deep snow. Eventually it grows too cold even for snow to fall. Ice rises up from every lake and river, forming glaciers that bear down on everything in the kingdom until they grip the entire region in their icy shackles. The terrible winter freezes those inhabitants who survive the march of ice, transforming them into frozen statues beneath the endless snow. Philodox speculate that as the Garou forget the stories of the great heroes, more of the Legendary Realm's kingdoms fall beneath the soul-numbing cold of the Fimbulwinter.

Even in the Legendary Realm, few willingly enter the frozen nations. Those who do so and return tell tales of castles made of ice and huge giants with flesh hoary with frost or comprised entirely of snow. No one knows the origin or agenda of these creatures, but direct confrontations with them seldom end well for travelers.

The Hungry Dust

Once, all the kingdoms of the Legendary Realm were prosperous lands where no one went hungry, but that may soon come to an end. Some years ago a great plague of locusts emerged from the warm veldts of the south and descended on the fields of a neighboring kingdom, reducing the wheat and corn to sand. The werewolf hero who ruled over that land did everything in his power stop the clouds of locusts and the choking dust storms that rose up in their wake, but the Hungry Dust left his kingdom a wasteland, its farmers starving in the midst of brown desolation. Even

STORY SEED: THE HUNGRY DUST

While some Garou nod sagely and speculate that the Hungry Dust is but another unavoidable consequence of the approach of the Last Battle, one of the Legendary Realm's kings refuses to take the rampant starvation of his subjects lying down. He sends the pack on a quest to find the source of the locusts that brought the Hungry Dust from the veldts of the Wylderness far to the south. The pack must navigate starving shapeshifter kingdoms on the brink of war, guard their own precious supplies against desperate bandits — or share what they can without endangering their mission's success — and fend off beasts of the Wylderness in search of the Hungry Dust's point of origin. They must then investigate the area for the root cause of the famine and — more importantly — identify a way the Legendary Realm can fight this gnawing threat to all its inhabitants.

the mightiest restorative magics have failed to repair the blight, which the people of the Realm call the Hungry Dust.

The kingdom's allies heard its ruler's pleas for help and sent food to the land of hunger and dust, preventing the populace from dying of famine. However, the Hungry Dust continued to spread throughout the kingdoms of the Legendary Realm until its nations could no longer feed all those affected by it. Many kingdoms' rulers now stockpile food against the day when the Hungry Dust reaches their borders. Their desperate, starving neighbors look with envy on these reserves and raise armies with which to conquer the prosperous countries to plunder their grain and livestock.

The Great Miasma

Bogs, swamps, and moors have always been a part of the landscapes of the Legendary Realm. They are often dangerous, monster-haunted places in the Wylderness, but they seldom caused any concern for the shapeshifter inhabitants of the Realm. These regions of decay and fetid water have been expanding for the last several years, however, encroaching on the borders of nearby kingdoms. Although this loss of usable land causes some consternation, the odors of the Wurm that now emanate from these wetlands pose a real threat. Anyone who breathes this foulness for too long falls horribly ill and will perish unless they are brought into clean air once more. Drinking waters from these areas has the same effect. What's more, these plagues are contagious, and even shapeshifters can fall victim to them.

STORY SEED: THE GREAT MIASMA

One of the queens of the Legendary Realm fell into a bog that encroached on her demesne while she was hunting, and the corrupting toxins of the Great Miasma left her bed-ridden in her castle. In the Legendary Realm, the condition of a kingdom reflects the health of its ruler, and so the entire nation has fallen ill along with its queen. Fields and orchards withered. Livestock became unmanageable, and their flesh was tough and foul-tasting.

Now the skies bring sleet and hail each day, and not even a ray of sunlight penetrates the gloom. Many of the kingdom's residents suffer from the same illness that felled their queen, while others endure horrible, wasting plagues with fevers that drive them to violence and madness.

To save the kingdom the pack must find a cure for the queen. Centuries ago, the lords of the Realm exiled a powerful Theurge to the Wylderness for a grave misdeed. Although he is treacherous and bitter, he alone might possess the wisdom needed to restore the queen's health. Finding the Theurge is a quest in itself, and convincing him to cooperate will be its own ordeal. The return journey may yet prove the hardest task the pack must face, however, for some enemy of the queen does not want her to recover. These antagonists intercept the pack on the route and steal the elixir or, failing that, threaten to destroy it if they are not allowed to escape with the queen's precious medicine.

The chase is on, and the pack soon learns more about the queen's enemies. Are they servants of the Wurm sent by the Midnight Lands? Are they allies of one of the queen's rivals or some other enemy of hers within the Legendary Realm. Or are they merely subjects of another lord equally in need of the cure the pack seeks?

Pangaea

The Silver Record documents Garou history farther back than the War of Rage, before the Impergium, even prior to the division of the tribes of Garou. As ancient as that prehistoric chronicle is, Gaia Herself has experienced epochs and eras

unseen by species much older than her wolves. Sprawling periods of titanic carnivores and molten landscapes, where the scale of conflict rattles the earth and shakes the sky.

The Near Realm Pangaea is the mythic echo of those long-ago times, drawn from Gaia's far-reaching memory and shaped with crude, stone tools. It's equal parts Paleozoic and Mesozoic, indiscriminately painted with elements of a young Gaia's primeval instability and the wholly fantastical. It's a land of massive sauropods and monsters, where tribes of primitive near-humans seek shelter from colossal predators and clouds of searing ash.

Pangaea is an incredibly biodiverse, hazardous environment. It's an immense, unbroken landmass surrounded by a dark, restless ocean. It fosters a number of different ecoregions in close proximity: humid jungles, airy mountains, wide tundras and dense taigas. What brings greater danger to an already nuanced realm is the ever-changing landscape. While comparatively stable compared to the Flux Realm, a savannah may become a desert or a mountain range overnight, as Pangaea goes through millennia of geological changes in mere hours. The land of the realm churns and toils nearly as much as the sea, changing the face of Pangaea with grand upheavals of earth and substratum. Volcanoes erupt from the ruins of earthquake-toppled mountains, bellowing fiery ash into a sky bloated with dark clouds. Serac-spiked glaciers in the north move like ponderous ships over land and sea, leaving moraines and cirques in their wake.

Pangaea is a formidable realm, but the perils are far greater than the constant geological convulsing. Creatures from as recent as ten thousand years ago, to far back as two hundred million, stalk across the same regions. Giant saurian carnivores hunt stampeding titanotheres across fragile tundra. Black pits of molten tar claim unwary predators in landscapes patrolled by the bulky precursors of wolf and badger. Scorched, volcanic wastelands stretch for untold miles, home only to the reptilian creatures tough enough to survive in flesh-searing heat. Starving pterodactyls plummet through the treetops of dense jungles to pluck screaming apes from slender branches.

As much as it is a realm of tumult, Pangaea is also a font of great spiritual power. Potent caerns litter the land in great number, and a rare vitality suffuses visiting shapeshifters. The dividing line drawn between tribes evaporates for Changing Breeds in Pangaea. The Glass Walkers do not exist in Pangaea, the Red Talons are forgotten, even the Black Spiral Dancers are undefined by their tribe. Garou are simply Garou. Similarly, the Simba, Khan, and Pumonca all disparities, leaving behind only the Bastet. Pangaea recognizes few divisions, and for the duration of their stay, those who have their tribal identities sundered come to forget they ever existed.



Entry and Exit

Pangaea is not the most difficult Near Realm to enter, but the path is not without dangers. Plenty of Moon Bridges reach the Realm, but the Wyld's influence makes them unpredictable and perilous. Banes lurk at known entrances, eager to finish off the wounded who seek Pangaea's restorative energies.

In the material world, Glens of some power provide direct access to Pangaea. On occasion, a great spirit-sauropod breaks through into reality and reaps a terrible harvest before dying from the weight of its own ill-prepared existence. These Glens exist in places where the presence of man is forgotten or unknown, and the occasional human who does visit may find herself in a very strange land indeed.

To leave the Realm is as simple as finding a Glen. From there, a werewolf may leave Pangaea without a roll. The Dream Zone is accessible from anywhere in Pangaea, given a deep enough sleep – though most require the powerful narcotic plants found in Pangaea to achieve a deep enough sleep.

The Elder Serpent

The land of tyrant sauropods has a king. A creature so massive and terrible no resident of the Near Realm can bear its presence without buckling to their fear. This winged, reptilian monstrosity resembles the dragons of European myth. Its sweeping wingspan can hide the daylight from entire tracts of forest. The Serpent's maw dwarfs even large caverns. Its talons crush stone and slag as easily as the bones of tyrannosaur and mammoth. It is immensity given form, and the undisputed monarch of Pangaea.

It makes its lair in the tallest volcanoes of the Realm, where the mile-high mountains are too dense for even Pangaea's tectonic might to crumble. In the far-reaching history of the realm, no shapeshifter has successfully scaled the nameless crags. The massive predator seeks shapeshifters when they appear in its kingdom. It arrives in a cacophony of sound and fury. The buffeting of the Elder Serpent's wings is louder than the realm's ubiquitous thunder and its roar deafens nearby ears to the eruptions of volcanoes.

To some, The Elder Serpent is a powerful agent of the Wyrms. It's the Unmaker's embodiment of unrepentant pride. To others, it's the living memory of the Wyrms-that-was, keeping other forces from growing unchecked in Pangaea. In any case, it demands tasks of its visitors. Most often, it requests invasive Garou to destroy agents of the Wyld or Weaver that have grown too strong in the Realm. A shapeshifter may refuse it one time and leave Pangaea immediately. Should she return, the Elder Serpent will destroy her.

The Serpent is very old, and has at its disposal many rites no longer taught to the Changing Breeds; rites of fire

RITE OF THE EARTHSTONE

Level Four Caern Rite

Caerns are few and far between the modern age, though much of Garou infrastructure requires them. With this ancient rite, the ritemaster can make limited use of that existing groundwork. He must wash his hands in clean water and bury them to the wrists in healthy earth. The whole process takes a little over an hour, during which the spiritual essence of the ritemaster is soaked into the soil. Upon completion, the ritemaster pulls his hands free of the earth and a basalt obelisk rises from the spot in a short-lived fissure of bubbling lava. Even those not present for the ritual may touch the cool stone, which confers the same spiritual shiver as crossing onto the bawn of a caern.

System: The player spends one dot of permanent Gnosis, and as many temporary points of Gnosis as he chooses, and rolls Stamina + Primal Urge (difficulty 7). If successful, anyone who touches the Earthstone treats it as a Level 1 caern ten yards in diameter, but only for the purposes of rites, Gifts and Charms. Though the Earthstone does not generate Gnosis on its own, points of temporary Gnosis spent during the ritual are distributed between anyone in contact with the stone. Unless moved or destroyed, the Earthstone is permanent. The ritual must be performed again to exchange additional Gnosis. Using this ritual on an intact, unmoved Earthstone does not require the expenditure of a permanent Gnosis.

and stone. It will often offer to teach these rites to those that obey its demands.

The Graveyard of the Lost

Hidden in one of the dense forests of Pangaea is a mound of countless bones. Ranging from the fossilized to the exceptionally fresh, these skeletons, shells and carapaces are the remains of every distinct species gone extinct in reality. Notable are the sad, warform remnants of several lost Changing Breeds. The Graveyard of the Lost is a Level Five caern.

The Savage Tribes

A strangely diverse number of human and near-human tribes exist in Pangaea, despite the danger. Sharing the

responsibilities of predator and prey, they eke out harsh little lives in a world of ravenous giants.

How they've come to dwell in Pangaea is a mystery. No concrete evidence of their origin exists in Pangaea, but rumors abound. Some believe them to be the souls of those lost before Gaia created the Dark Umbra to house the deceased of mankind. Others speculate these are refugees from the Impergium, trapped in this savage land when they tried to flee the culling.

Many of these tribes exist, but (with the exception of the Thulan) are divided. Beyond the constant battle for resources and shelter, the range of cultures and morality across the span of these brutal peoples is vast. From the noble Thulan, whose ideals are comparable to the best of modern man, to the barely-human Zarak-Ur who devour their defeated foes.

The Desert Barbarians

In the vast deserts of Pangaea, where the scorched bones of the unwary bleach on cracked sandstone, the extremely adaptive desert barbarians carve out an existence harsh even by the standards of the other tribes. The lengths they go to for survival are recounted with awe by the other humans of Pangaea. Their fearsome, black-glass axes are prized by their warrior caste and feared by their foes. The shining, scaled hides of their huntsmen give the nameless nomads a distinct, saurian silhouette against the endless desert wastes. They owe their survival to the xixa cactus: a rich source of hydration, edible pulp and, when fermented, a foul but effective intoxicant. The desert tribes' most aggressive predator is dehydration, regardless of the succulent's abundance.

The Thulan

The Thulan are several small, distinct Pangaeian tribes who have come to together in an informal network of trade and language. They cover a gamut of cultures and appearances, but through constant contact have come to form a desperate tribal nation. They have no written language, but their guttural speech is so close to the Garou High Tongue that modern werewolves have no issue with contact.

The Thulan are however a careful people. Their constant, deadly clashes with the cannibal Zarak-Ur have made them intensely suspicious of outsiders. An enterprising Garou can find a powerful ally against the Wyrms in the Thulan. While they have a varied, superstitious array of spiritual beliefs, they revere the same Gaia as the Garou.

The Zarak-Ur

The Zarak-Ur were once a noble people who prized the glories of the hunt above all else. Spiritual agents of the Wyrms have subverted that pride, turning them into the scourge of Pangaea. They revere powerful Banes as totems,

STORY SEEDS

- Through a Glen into the material world, a Thulan tribesman has come to seek a werewolf he dreamed would help his tribe. The Zarak-Ur have unearthed an ancient Bane who leads them to all-out war against their rivals. The loss of the Thulan would mean the Garou have few potential allies in Pangaea.

- A totem of a lost Changing Breed has woken from an age of slumber, in Pangaea's Graveyard of the Lost. Its cry has echoed through the membranes of the Umbra, and Theurges have dreamed about its advent. Unfortunately, the call has rattled the Weaver's webs and stirred the interest of agents of the Wyrms. The characters must get to it first.

- A goofy, cryptozoology-focused television show believes they've discovered a new species of alligator. In their search for more of its kind, they enter a Glen connected to Pangaea with a full crew of unsuspecting cameramen. Not only do they risk their own lives in the Realm, if their tapes hit the airwaves much greater threats to Pangaea will take notice.

and cover themselves in furs and dyes to mimic the sickly Crinos forms of Black Spiral Dancers – pulling the only tribal distinctions in the Realm from their terrible dreams. The hunters of the tribe make the Zarak-Ur cunning foes for all the creatures of Pangaea. Their wily traps and poison spears can fell the largest of saurian carnivores, but their favorite prey is other humans.

The Wym-worshipping tribesmen have something the other tribes of man do not: written language. Their primitive glyph-writing is messy and painful to look at, more akin to the sign code of modern transients than a comprehensive language, but it allows for incredible organization. Between this and the bird-like speech given to them by the Black Spiral Dancer totem Whippoorwill, the hunts of the Zarak-Ur are preternaturally coordinated.

As if they didn't pose enough of a threat to the humans of Pangaea, the Wym has recently instilled in them an infatuation with flame. Their fiery raids against the other tribes threaten to char large swaths of the Realm itself.

The Mountain People

Caves and secret places puncture the mountains of Pangaea in untold number. The dwellers of those dark corners are far stranger than even the Zarak-Ur. Vast,

cavernous hollows hide a people who have spent too long beneath the earth. Hunched, leathery troglodytes blind from eons without light. These bulky monsters do not discriminate between visitor, foe and food, and however they communicate it isn't through their crooked, sharp-toothed mouths. Occasionally, a great moaning song rises from the mountains that lets the other tribes know to keep out of Pangaea's caves: the mountain people are hungry.

Scar

Glass Walker historians posit the Scar's existence began with Rome and its aqueducts. These marvels of engineering and organization cast a gleaming Realm in the kiln of human innovation. In that scenario, it wasn't until the early days of modern industry that the Wyrms took interest in this shining proto-Scar. The Weaver's careless plunge toward mechanization gave the Unmaker a chance to hitch its horse to Grandmother Spider's wagon, and it did so with glee. Others claim that the Scar has always been a joint venture of the Weaver and Wyrms. Before it was a chemically poisoned cityscape, it was a coal dust-choked mining town. Before that, a plantation of sickening toil. Before that, a scorching limestone quarry.

Whichever the case, the Industrial Revolution defined the Scar as it's now known: acrid smoke and endless toil. The entire Realm is a caustic look at the Garou's failure to stop the creep of industrialization. Few Realms exist more depraved or grotesque than the Scar, and no Realm in the vast Umbra is so perfectly built to get under Garou skin. The spirit world's most petty, Garou-baiting cruelty. The Scar is a promise co-signed by the Wyrms and Weaver: this is the future of Gaia.

The vile Near Realm resembles a dirty, overcrowded cityscape. Faceless towers of black glass and steel stand like insectoid hairs from a thorax of refuse-covered parking lots. Soot-caked factory complexes belch foul smoke into the air and ooze brackish sludge into already oily rivers. The fluorescent sky is so murky with grey-green fumes that day and night are meaningless distinctions. Exhausted denizens wait in gridlocked traffic between their sixteen hours shifts at one of countless textile mills, complacently pining for the day when their hard work is noticed by callous supervisors. The streets and alleyways of the Scar overflow with hollow-eyed vagrants, worked to the bone and cast aside when the harsh rigors of factory life finally cost them their ability to work.

Experiencing the Realm firsthand is dangerous enough to give packs of experienced Garou pause. Shapeshifters who visit the Realm risk becoming trapped by the dense, rusty web that makes the Scar's spiritual membrane one of the hardest to escape in the Umbra. The weight of the

noxious air hangs so heavily on a werewolf's heart that mustering the will to fight becomes a challenge all its own. If captured by the uniformed, corporate-controlled Banes that act as the Scar's police force, an imprisoned Garou can expect the same indentured servitude as the Realm's malnourished spirits. Forced to labor in the miasma of the factories, even the most resolute werewolf has little chance to shake off the Scar's overbearing complacency. If she labors too long there will be nothing left to rescue.

For the employees of the Scar's corporate giants, the drain on their spiritual well-being is absolute. They retain enough of themselves to work, but they're only alive by technicality. These drones trudge toward the final whistle of the day, when the shifts end and they get precious few hours of sleep before the entire cycle begins anew. When she can labor no longer, a fortunate spirit is thrown to the mean streets of Scar. If she's less lucky, she's mulched by gruesome machinery for the last traces of her Gnosis.

Entry and Exit

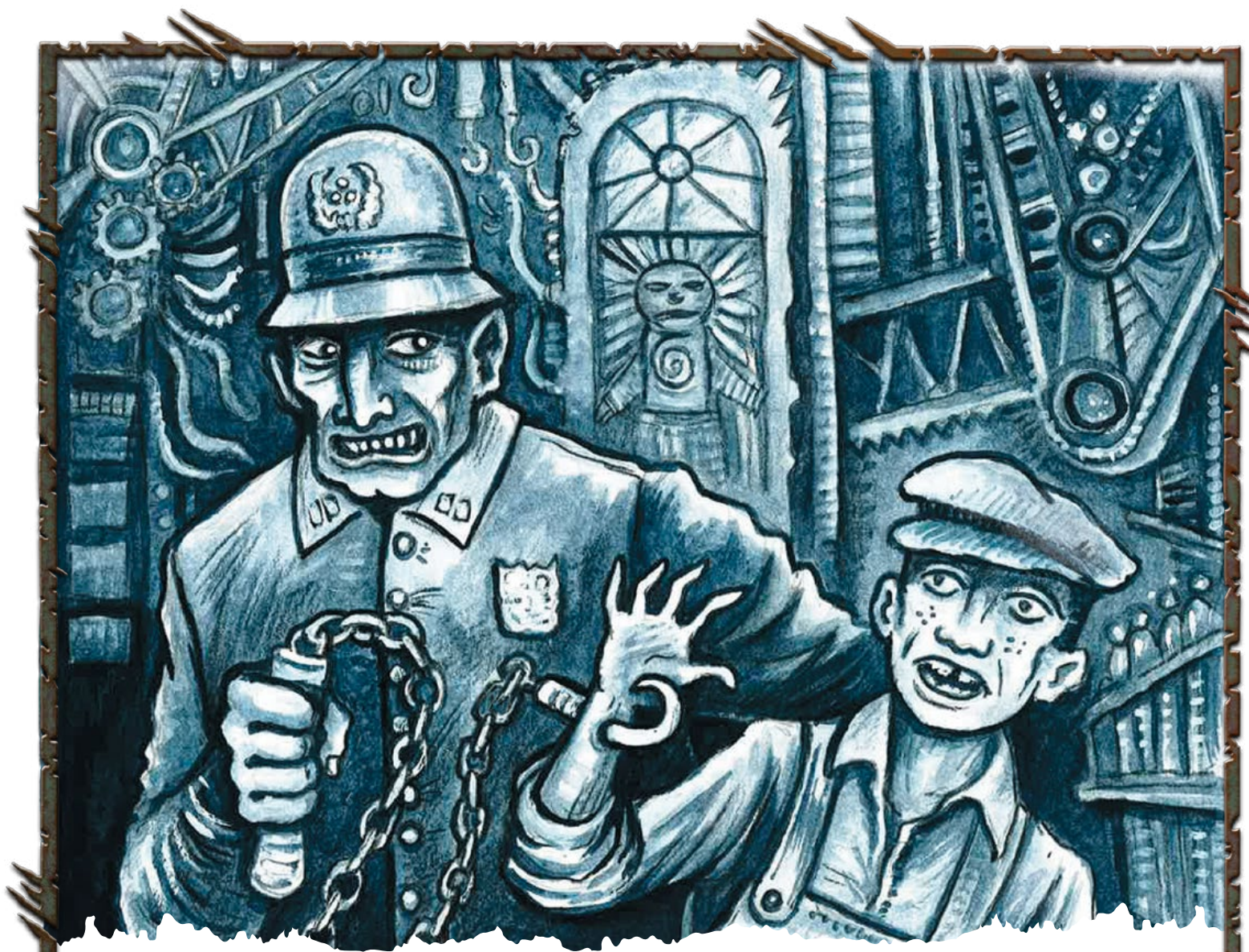
Getting to the Scar is almost frighteningly easy. A myriad of paths lead to the repugnant Realm, and its entrances are protected by little more than a token show of force. If anything, the Realm invites visitors. Entry is as simple as following a path to its conclusion, following a disused railroad line, or a cobbled road past brick buildings, well lit by gas lamps. As a traveler nears the Scar, the density of the Weaver's webbing increases exponentially. The eventual tangled latticework is the result of an absurd number of pattern-spiders.

As easy as it is to enter the Realm, leaving the Scar is a feat of some cunning. The unusual thickness of the Gauntlet surrounding the Scar prevents all but the most gifted shapeshifters from stepping sideways. Failed attempts to breach the Realm's dense membrane result in an immediate, overwhelming response from the Weaver's frantic minions. Many Garou prefer to dream their way free of the Realm, escaping into the Dream Zone from web-filled nightmares. Unfortunately, the very nature of the Scar makes dreams of escape unlikely.

The truly desperate can always take the train.

The Gnosis Batteries

All Gnosis drained from the worker-spirits, as well as any gathered from the scraps of former employees, is stored in incredible vats beneath the floors of every factory in the Scar. Disinterested operators pump the sickening puree of their laid-off coworkers from these wells of energy into the husks of mass-produced Wyrms fetishes. The Gnosis batteries are fiercely protected by Bane and pattern-spider alike. The smallest rupture will return vast quantities of power and awareness to otherwise helpless laborers.



The Last Junction

The massive, all but abandoned train yard in the Scar is known colloquially as the Last Junction. Here, a single engine awaits departure. The hulking, ever-smoking monstrosity resembles a locomotive in general terms, but the hellish angles and unnecessary smokestacks give it the appearance of a living creature.

No tracks lead to the Last Junction, only away from the twisted cityscape of the Scar. The massive, lightless maw of the tunnel that leaves the station has one destination and one destination alone: Malfeas.

The Barons of Industry

A cadre of like-minded Wyrms and Weaver-spirits keep the Scar running. Individually, the barons are literally incorporated entities: ruthless spirit-amalgams comprised of the most nauseating, banal elements of corporate culture. The barons are afforded some small autonomy from their Celestine shareholders, so long as they keep things

in the black. That small freedom over their respective business-kingdoms is impetus to improve the bottom line at any cost. To that end, the barons are almost always at odds with each other, competing for the biggest cut of every awful opportunity. The Scar's wicked efficiency is built around these chum-strewn waters.

The reach of the barons comes almost entirely from the Scrag and twisted emanations that make up the Scar's corrupt peacekeepers. These thugs are little more than monsters clad in their respective corporation's vivid sponsorship. They are as likely to gnaw the thin fibers of Gnosis from an exhausted lawbreaker as detain them. Unfortunately for the populace of the Scar, they're fiercely loyal to the barons, and avoiding the peacekeepers is impossible. They wear many hats, so long as the position gives them authority to abuse. They're sadistic overseers of the factory floor, abusive police officers with something to prove, and violent strike-breakers with a taste for making messy examples.

Scrag aren't the only spirits on the barons' payroll. Bane Spiders, the massive Wyrms-tainted Weaver-spirits

responsible for the architecture of the Scar, are the Realm's city planners and engineers. Though they occasionally act as overseers and jailors, the many-legged arachnids prefer to ply their trade as consultants than get their many-jointed hands dirty.

Troubled Economy

Things aren't looking so great for the Gnosis economy of the Scar. The barons who fled to the CyberRealm during the last decade returned to find their holdings consumed or bankrupt. Subservience to the new school of oily businessman is their only option, until they can muster the resources for a successful mutiny.

Whereas the last generation of barons modeled themselves after the fat-cats of early American enterprise, this generation is all business casual youth willing to lay groundwork with the very Realm that ousted the old guard. Realistically, this has left the majority of the Scar as little more than an old fashioned subsidiaries of the CyberRealm's sleek, light-speed start-ups.

The troubles of the upper echelon certainly don't mean relief for the lower rungs of the Realm's overtaxed workforce. If anything, the overseers are meaner, the deadlines are tighter and the already deplorable conditions worsen by the day. The Scar's resemblance to the sweatshops of reality's corner-cutting outsourcers is no accident. Whether it's grotesquely unsafe working conditions or dependency-driven debt slavery, the influence of the Scar is a two-way street. The Realm feeds on the horrors First World business inflicts on less developed countries, and its insidious agents reward the most egregious offenders. Even with the Bane CEOs of the Scar struggling to keep their collective heads above water, the Realm still serves its dire purposes.

Monkeywrench

No shortage of spirits find the Scar antithetical to their continued purpose. Countless Incarna have lost their brood to the Wyrms-fetish assembly lines of the unforgiving Near Realm. Of all the spirits interested to the Scar's dissolution, the totem Rat is among the most zealous. He plays an active role directing Bone Gnawer and Ratkin alike into the Scar, even if his means aren't always the most direct or honest. Once in the Scar, Rat encourages almost any act that puts the boots to the Realm's upper management.

To meet Rat's eventual goal of leaving the Scar a smoking ruin, the union Amalgamated Iron unites the lowest of the Garou Nation and Gaia's plague-bearers. Though the Bone Gnawers and Ratkin have one of the least-troubled relationships of any Garou tribe and Changing Breed, the Scar has made that relationship a concrete necessity for either group to function. The continued cooperation has

STORY SEEDS

- The characters' sept becomes aware of a massive shipment of Wyrms fetishes leaving the Scar for Malfeas. The characters have to find out which train is carrying the awful cargo before it exits the Realm for the heart of the Wyrms' domain.

- A Scar baron, fearing what will happen when his business in the Scar goes belly-up, has possessed a human host in the physical world. Now, a formerly benign non-profit organization is beginning to operate with the unscrupulous tactics of a dangerous corporate giant, using surprise and the good will they'd cultivated to cripple a number of multinational Glass Walker business fronts. They're planning something huge, and can't have werewolves looking over their shoulder.

- A pack of seasoned Garou disappeared into the Scar and hasn't been heard from since. With their sept already in danger from being so short-handed, the only Garou they can spare for a rescue attempt is a single, fresh-faced pack: the characters.

- Amalgamated Iron has recently suffered a crippling setback at the hands of a Black Spiral Dancer pack who fancy themselves modern-day Pinkertons. They put one of Amalgamated Iron's leaders to work in a dreadful textile mill, and they've thwarted every attempt at rescue. It's possible, with Amalgamated Iron's open door recruitment policy, that a traitor lurks within their ranks.

opened doors for other Garou tribes to throw their lot in with Amalgamated Iron. Any shapeshifter welcomed into the union receives the benefits of Rat as a totem, as long as they remain in Scar.

Since its inception, Amalgamated Iron has drawn interest from the barons of the Realm. Aside from destroying Gnosis batteries, and putting a messy end to many of the Realm's supposed peace-keepers, Amalgamated Iron has gone out of its way to encourage the creation of labor unions among the Scar's downtrodden. While the original attempts failed because of the Scar's thick miasma of apathy, Amalgamated Iron has found that spirits in the wake of a sudden, explosive infusion of Gnosis are much more willing to unify.

Summer Country

To the storied Galliard, Summer Country is a myth. It's an allegory given bones by song and the hypotheticals of wishful Theurges. To the modern Garou, the idyllic, spiritual landscape is nothing more than the desperate need to have a final, uncorrupted place free of the slithering tendrils of the Wyrms. Few werewolves can refute the claims to the Realm's non-existence. Summer Country is intangible even by the Umbra's standards. The Garou brazen enough to imply she's visited the Elysian Realm struggles to describe it in any detail. The shapeshifter healed by its wondrous balms cannot explain how. This does little to lend credence to its existence.

The breadth of knowledge regarding Summer Country isn't very broad at all. Memories of the Realm resist scrutiny, like dreams on waking. In these half-remembered stories, Summer Country is a leafy island in a sea of vivid blue, dotted with mountainous peaks and subtle valleys. The island's crystalline sky is stuck in a perpetual spring. The only rain that falls from its heavens is warm and gentle. The bulk of the island is a curved length of land, which forms a lagoon large enough for a small sea. The lagoon, in turn, shelters several smaller landmasses, the greatest of which is the Isle of Self.

The mainland of Summer Country is a collection of several distinct but temperate biomes. The rugged Mountains of the Moon and highest point of those craggy steeps, Mount Peace, are home to an untold menagerie of predators and prey. In these hills, valleys and cliffs, the inhabitants of the island keep hale by prowling the slopes and fleeing predators. At the extreme ends of the island are the forests Longing and Promise, covering farthest west and farthest east curves of the Realm respectively. At the center of the Forest of Promise, in the Enchanted Glade, is a massive granite amphitheater where the denizens of Summer Country gather and celebrate. The Forest of Longing on the other hand, is a beautiful, bittersweet place whose ancient ambiance alone is enough to evoke both respite and heartache.

The Isle of Self

The Isle of Self, which is only one of many verdant landmarks of the Realm, houses a shrine to Gaia's glories indivisible. Nestled among the island's overwhelming vegetation, the shrine resembles a great latticework of interwoven grasses in a disparate array of colors. Inside, weathered pillars of sparkling limestone rise around a quietly bubbling spring. That spring is the Well of Life, whose waters are panacea to any illness of body, mind or soul. A sip from it will cure any physical infirmity, knit together a

broken mind, and soothe all but the deepest scars of the soul. The Isle of Self and the Well of Life have been a part of Garou storytelling since Galliards had songs.

The Well of Life

The Well of Life cures any abnormality—and the birth wounds of the metis are no exception. A sip of the Well's water makes gnarled limbs fit, soothes troubled thoughts, even grants a metis the appendages she was born without. Bathing in the Well itself revokes even the sterility that makes the breed anathema to its people.

However, the curse of the metis isn't an accident. She isn't meant to be whole. When she leaves Summer Country, the metis loses this new-found gift of integrity. New limbs fade or wither, bad thoughts return, and so too does the stigma of their birth. Only the wounds and derangements unrelated to her burden as metis remain healed. Often, the deformities will return in new ways, though they never stray too far from the original adversity. A werewolf born without sight may return to reality without hearing, a metis with one arm may return with a useless, withered limb instead. In any case, the effect is jarring. The fuzzy, misremembered memories of being hale are unlikely to make up for having to adapt to new challenges.

Of specific note, the pregnancies conceived by a temporarily fertile metis trap the mother in Summer Country for the duration. She cannot leave the Realm, either willingly or by force, until she bears the fruit of her union. The child comes to term alarmingly fast, born in just under a lunar month, and the birth itself is the easiest in nature. What's born is a being of pure ephemera: a wolf-spirit with eerie, human eyes. That spirit is bound to Summer Country forever, making for a bittersweet birthday at best. As a small mercy granted to the parents, the name they give him is not taken from them by the fugue of memory inherent in leaving the Realm.

Cloudtop High

Cloudtop High, another island in the lagoon's inner ocean, floats high above the mirror-calm waters. Its suspension far above the sea leaves a tangle of thick, healthy roots hanging rope-like from its underside. And from that underside hangs every possible species of bat. On the surface of the isle, countless other beasts of the sky make their home in great flocks. Insects, birds, and eons-extinct dimorphodons exist side-by-side, eager to ferry visitors between the shores of the mainland and the massive, spired castle of living vines at Cloudtop High's peak. Unlike the shrine on the Isle of Self and its curative properties, the entire purpose of the nameless keep is the pilgrimage itself. Summer Country's visitors seek it for the sole intention of communing with Gaia.

The Garden of Delight

Perhaps oddest of all Summer Country's locations is the Garden of Delight. This colorful, swampy nursery creates new life in a kind of spiritual parthenogenesis. That life is born spontaneously, and its mettle is immediately tested by the competition-rich environment. Creatures of all sizes and tempers are tried here, the fittest of which incarnate on the other side of the Gauntlet as a new part of Earth's ecosystem. Those creatures whose short existence does not lead to the origin of a new, Earthly species find permanent homes in Summer Country as spirits.

Not all life in the Realm owes its existence to the Garden of Delight. The traveler who makes it here is more than likely at the end of an arduous journey, and likely to stay. As a result, spirits, shapeshifters, and human emanations share Summer Country's endless bounty with its home-grown denizens. They do so peaceably, though the lion still eats the lamb and the wolf still hunts the hare.

When a creature perishes in Summer Country, either to feed a predator or by accident, it will wake with the next dawn, whole and hale. In this way, the Realm's tranquility does not subvert the roles nature is driven to take. Which is not to say the relationships before the varied cast of flora and fauna play out entirely like they would in the physical world. The leopard who has eaten the fox spends a chilly night curled around the vixen's mewling kits. The spider releases the fly it is too full to devour. The doe who knows the bear is hungry wills herself not to run from his roar.

These mild subversions of the natural order are not terribly widespread in Summer Country. Instinct is too powerful a drive and the Realm is a wild place. When they do occur, there is no distain for the participants. Summer Country has no room for the small-minded.

Coming and Going

It's a difficult journey to Summer Country, and difficult to remain. At best, any shapeshifter hunting for the halcyon Near Realm has a long, fruitless chase ahead of her. At worst, the singular obsession sends her hurtling toward grief, frustration, and Harano. It's a risk just to consider Summer Country a real place; no weight on the heart is as unbearable as the fleeting hope the Realm inspires.

Summer Country is real, but it's almost as much a mindset as an actual Realm. No path leads there, no guardians defend it, and no amount of travel will find its shores. To divine its location requires a strength of being few Garou posses, and a willingness to love thy enemy that few Garou could suffer.

Foremost in finding Summer Country is having wealth of respect for all things. The questing Garou must understand that everything has a place—even if she cannot

STORY SEEDS

- A Theurge of some great Renown, missing for almost a decade, returns to his sept with urgent news of trouble in Summer Country. Unfortunately, in leaving the Realm the nature of that trouble is lost. However, the panic he feels has not diminished in the least.

- A Realm that sounds very much like the fabled Summer Country becomes open to all shapeshifting denizens interested in seeking peace and beauty. Not all is well, however. There are menaces here (banes and monsters and humans) supposed to be impossible in the almost mythic Near Realm, and the local packs are ready to go to war to claim this supposed Summer Country for themselves.

- An ailing hero of the sept recites a story of when he visited Summer Country in his youth, and how thoroughly he wishes to return before succumbing to his age. He asks the characters to help him make good the wrongs of his life, so he can either love himself enough to turn, or pass into Gaia's arms with fewer burdens.

fathom what that place is, or why it should be. More than simply seeking peace with the things she believes are good and right, she has to embrace the notion that everything is worthy of its existence. Everything, including the things that have hurt and humiliated her. Everything, including the Wyrms and its minions. Everything, including herself and her weaknesses. She cannot have reservations or caveats about the love she gives. She must open herself to the idea that her prejudices, her hates, and her sorrows are all too out of sync with the place she's pursuing, and expunge them. If she cannot, she won't find the Realm.

The rare Garou who achieves this epiphany finds herself in the Forest of Longing, beset by an overwhelming nostalgia for better days. If at any point she loses sight of the singular, all-encompassing love that brought her here, she is summarily ejected from the Realm. The memories formed in Summer Country don't survive well outside it. They become more dreamlike and indistinct as the heart hardens to modern rigors.

Now

The Wyrms' influence has of yet failed to reach Summer Country, but there's no telling when it will. None of the

Realm's inhabitants are naive enough to believe themselves safe forever. Among the denizens, two reigning schools of thought exist on the inevitable tainting of this Umbral Eden. One group believes now is the time to cut all ties the world outside the Realm, sundering any connection Summer Country has to Earth and the Umbra at large. They argue that the one pure place with the option to survive has an obligation to do just that. The other group understands how important the Realm is to Gaia and her children, and how inextricably its fate is bound to them. They advocate throwing open the proverbial gates, and bringing in all those who might need refuge from the sickness and horror outside. Even if it means the Wyrms will get there that much faster.

Of course, the keenest minds of Summer Country understand that this division could be the very thing that brings the Near Realm to its knees. Unfortunately, these are among the quietest voices in the debate, drowned out by the passions of the zealous.

Wolfhome

Wolfhome is one of the stranger Near Realms. It's not a pleasant place for most shapeshifters, but it's not a microcosm of suffering and pain either. Instead, it's a realm of humility and weakness that strips much of a shapeshifter's powers and intellect and renders him a hunted animal. Some elders deliberately send a cub to Wolfhome to teach him a valuable lesson. Learning that lesson is the only way out; until the shapeshifter is able to understand, accept, and reconcile with his bestial nature, he may not leave the realm.

Entry to the realm immediately forces all shapeshifters into their Lupus (or equivalent) forms. Garou become wolves, Corax become ravens, Ananasi become a whole swarm of spiders, and so forth. Their mentality becomes that of an animal as well, with their human thought processes suppressed. Even a Lupus-breed Garou, with her natural animal instincts, finds herself at a disadvantage when stripped of higher thought. The character's personality and habits remain intact, though — a Get of Fenris still has her combat experiences and a Silent Strider is inclined to wander.

Not only can they not think like a human without effort, but they can't even fully understand the 'human' inhabitants of Wolfhome — emanations unaware of their true nature. The things humans do are scary, bizarre, and incomprehensible to a shapeshifter in this state. Unlike the animal-spirits of Wolfhome, shapeshifters have some comprehension of the humans' language but may have to make Intelligence rolls to understand concepts like "key to the cage door" or "laboratory." Their own memories may

WOLFHOME BY ANY OTHER NAME

Given that Garou are among the most likely to wind up here — second only to the Ratkin — it's obvious that "Wolfhome" is simply the most common name for the place. The Garou's dominance over the other Changing Breeds, combined with being the only surviving Changing Breed to have lost close animal kin to domestication, obviously skews this realm towards their experience.

Most Fera don't even know about the place. The Nuwisha and Corax, as experienced Umbral travelers, know about as much as the Garou do. The Nuwisha call it "Wolfhome" as well, while the Corax prefer the term "Human Paradise." The Ratkin, who wind up near the Camps a little too often, call it "Hell."

become hazy and confusing as they recall basic events but lose details and context they can no longer grasp. As an optional rule, the Storyteller may remove access to the list of Abilities restricted from animal-breed characters on p. 76 of **W20**.

The animal-spirits of the realm can communicate with each other and the shapeshifters. They act how most beings would expect them to act — foxes are cunning, rabbits are skittish, and so on. The domesticated animals of the realm, particularly the dogs, are loyal to the humans above all else and the other animals despise them for it.

The wild animals of the realm — a group that now includes visiting shapeshifters — are always on the run from the human hunters. None of them can understand why they're treated like this. All they know is that the humans chase them with flying metal whirly-monsters and hunt them with loud fire-sticks that deliver pain and death. Sometimes the humans capture them and put them in foul-smelling cages for ease of torturing them and making them sick.

Some shapeshifters' animal forms, like those of the Corax and Ananasi, are almost safe in the realm. Their primary concerns tend to be natural predators, cruel children, or an exterminator. A Nagah's primary concern is staying out of the sight of the humans who will violently lash out in fear. Werewolves might, in bad light, be able to pass themselves off as huskies or German shepherds — despite how dangerous they are, the humans just aren't that clever — and just wind up in a shelter if caught.

Some shifters get it worse than others. Gurahl in bear form are prized targets for hunters in the forests and



treated as dangerous threats in sight of civilization. Mokolé might be able to hide out in the sewers of the Town, but otherwise they stay in the Countryside. The realm forces Rokea into a bull shark form so they can survive in one of the freshwater lakes or rivers that circle around and feed each other without ever reaching an ocean.

The Countryside

The landscape resembles a cross between a rustic English countryside and stereotypical suburbia. Small human suburbs and farms dot the land, as well as laboratories behind electrified fences. Even in the deeper portions of the broad countryside, scientific outposts and ranger stations show up just often enough to mean trouble for the wildlife. No large cities have ever been described in Wolfhome, and survivors who closely examine their experiences sometimes wonder why.

The deep countryside still offers the best chance of survival for the larger shapeshifters. The biggest danger, aside from human hunters and researchers with cages, would be other predators. A new shapeshifter to Wolfhome must compete with established predators for food and hunting territory, as there's still only so much countryside to go around. With luck, a Garou may be able to take over a native wolf pack.

The Town

The Town has no proper name, only humans living in suburbia. To a shapeshifter, it's uncomfortable and dangerous and generally avoided if she has the option. The Town is clean enough that scrounging for food means fighting with other animals for the contents of trash cans and dumpsters. Scrounging and fighting, naturally, draw attention that can get an animal killed or captured and locked up in the zoo — or worse.

Some humans in the Town aren't all bad. Families with children tend to be kind, and some shapeshifters can pass themselves off as something that can be adopted as a pet. In the case of Garou passing as dogs, this carries the risk of being recognized as a wolf by the "humane" society and brought to a shelter. Even if he's successfully passing as a dog, a Garou trapped in wolf form can still frenzy if his instincts are provoked by rough children or harassing animals.

Shelters

In Wolfhome, a 'shelter' is anything but. Humans in matching uniforms with painful equipment for controlling animals cram them into tiny, smelly, filthy cages where they share space with feral animals. Many are sick or even rabid, and even if they aren't they're not going to be neighborly. And then there are the humans who will insist on injecting

the character with drugs or perhaps even neutering them. A shapeshifter's regeneration may eventually reverse the procedure, but the humiliation could lead to frenzy.

Shelters are usually a last stop for animals that aren't fit to be a pet, and even a shapeshifter trapped in animal form has to worry about the shelter putting him to sleep. The alternative, if the animal isn't fit for a zoo, is to wind up in one of the camps. Being put to sleep would almost be a mercy in that case.

The Sewers

Some shapeshifters try to make a go of it in the sewers. Mokolé and Ratkin are obvious choices, and Bone Gnawers might try it out of familiarity. The sewers are as filthy and disgusting as one would expect, but a lot of potential food washes down from above. Like in the Countryside, claiming safe territory is a struggle against the natives. Even aside from the territory issue, packs of feral dogs and rats, not to mention an alligator or two, just might be hungry enough to try something fresh.

The Zoo

When captured, larger or obviously dangerous animals wind up in the zoo, or the aquarium, in the case of the Rokea. For a shapeshifter, the zoo is even more like a prison than the shelters. Animals in the zoo are on display, behind metal bars and in concrete dens while loud, smelly humans either gape slack-jawed or yell and throw things. And for some reason, a lot of them keep assaulting the animals' sight with flashing lights.

At best, the zoo is a boring experience, and even then that boredom will eventually get to be too much. Some of the zookeepers might be decent, but in general they exhibit typical human ignorance or blatantly abuse their charges. A shapeshifter is prodded and treated like something is expected of them, depending on how much the humans — particularly the children — whine or yell.

And then other animals wind up in the mix, especially in communal cages. Like in any prison, newcomers start at the bottom of the pecking order against some alpha jerk with flunkies backing him up. At the very least they'll hog the food, crummy as it is, but at worst the shapeshifter must either put up with the leader's dominance or fight back. Fighting back is a good way to wind up dealing with a sadistic zookeeper or get shipped off to one of the camps.

The Camps

The animals of Wolfhome call them "camps" because in general the terms "laboratory" or "medical testing center"

are too complex to grasp. Some animals understand that different camps want different things, but rarely care very much because the end result is always the same regardless. Men in uniforms with guns and tranquilizers take animals to camps to slowly suffer and die at the hands of doctors in lab coats no matter what the camp's exact goals are.

Scientists jab their charges with needles and pump them full of drugs designed to make them sick or woozy. They shave off the animals' fur to rub burning chemicals against the raw skin to see what happens. They trap their captives in mazes or shine lights and colors in their eyes — sometimes after making them sick or shocking them. Sometimes the experiments involve starvation or sensory deprivation. Any purpose to the experiments beyond pain and suffering is lost on the animals.

If a character acts a little too "smart," she may get the attention of a particularly curious researcher. This could mean she is now the personal project of someone who wants to try training her or studying her under less painful conditions. Maybe the researcher wants to poke a larger needle in her skin or tie a plastic box around her neck and release her into the wild to see what she does.

Or it means that she's wound up in the tender mercies of a scientist who wants to cut open her head and look at her brain.

Entry and Exit

Wolfhome is rarely an intentional destination. The characters that end up there are usually those who have neglected their duties to Gaia, displayed a severe ignorance or disdain towards their animal side, or otherwise need to be taken down a peg. Some elders have ways of sending other shapeshifters there, perhaps with a spirit ally. Travelers sometimes end up there after fleeing the Dream Zone. If a shapeshifter intentionally enters Wolfhome, it's likely to rescue a trapped packmate or septmate. In some cases, a trip to Wolfhome could serve as a test or vision quest, leading to Honor or Wisdom Renown upon the shapeshifter's return.

Leaving Wolfhome is an entirely different story. To exit Wolfhome, the shapeshifter has to get in touch with his animal side and truly understand the bestial aspects of his nature — likely in a way he never has before. The moment at which the character has learned his object lesson and how are up to the Storyteller's discretion, but once that moment is reached the character may leave.



Chapter Three: Worlds Beyond

The Near Umbra is a vast place. Not only does it house the Realms many Garou know of through story and song, it contains multitudes of ones that they do not know. Distance and time are fluid concepts, and a straight line is only rarely the shortest distance between two points. Minor Realms wink into existence as a facet of the world resonates in the minds of people there, then diminish—or disappear entirely—when the idea loses hold. Why the minor Realms come into existence as a result of the thoughts and beliefs of humans rather than all animals remains a mystery that the Garou are ill-placed to solve. Perhaps animals have their own minor Realms but the Garou are too human to recognize them for what they are. Other minor Realms include the homelands of the tribes of the Garou and Realms sacred to those Changing Breeds who spend much of their lives in the Umbra.

Nor is the Near Umbra the only spirit world. As in the Penumbra, at least two other spirit worlds overlap the physical world, and werewolves can travel to both the Astral Umbra of thought and feeling, and the Dark Umbral tempest. Each Umbra terminates in a boundary with the Deep Umbra, where the laws of reality fold in on themselves and anything is possible.

Minor Realms

The Realms of the Near Umbra can form around almost any theme or concept. Unlike the strange regions of the Deep Umbra, they are close enough to Gaia's influence that they tend to conform to Earth-like conditions with familiar rules and expectations.

Designing Minor Realms

The smaller realms usually have one or two thematic aspects that explore Garou existence. Examples from the major Near Realms are the Battleground and the nature of war, Erebus' exploration of absolution of spiritual pain and sin, or the Legendary Realm's ancient heroes and myths. When the Storyteller creates a minor Realm, she should keep a specific theme in mind. Realms can have multiple themes but these need to complement each other. The description of the Realm should make clear what the Storyteller expects from the Realm. If the Realm doesn't articulate the Storyteller's intentions, or becomes confused or unclear, the Realm may have too many aspects.

As well as the themes they wish to explore, Storytellers should develop a concept that describes the appearance of the Realm. This concept embodies the themes and how they are explored. The Storyteller decides the exaggerated elements of the Realm and what is absent. The Realm will have stronger hooks if themes are presented in interesting or challenging ways. Decide the mechanics of any elements that make navigation, movement or survival difficult, and how the characters can overcome these obstacles. The narrative is always the most important part of the story. Creative characters who invent interesting ways to overcome obstacles should succeed.

The storyteller should only define what is strange or bizarre in the Realm. Everything else works like normal. In a Realm like the Aetherial where clouds form the ground and everyone flies or moves about in great leaps, gravity still pulls everything down, everyone can still breathe even though there is technically no air, and time flows forward from past to future.

Example Minor Realms

Search Engine

Search Engine is linked to the Weaver's Pattern Web and resonates with all things of structure or form. The Glass Walker pack who discovered it theorize that it came into being with the rise of the internet.

The Realm always appears empty to new arrivals, as they stand on a large silver-white disk surrounded by blackness. No scents exist in this place except what the characters bring with them, and sounds fade off into the distance. Packs travelling together always arrive on the same disk, which alters size to accommodate the number of questers.

From here, visitors speak what they hope to find. Names are best, but clearly described concepts with plenty of detail also work. Once it has something to find Search Engine tries to find a connection. The blackness explodes into a cacophony of sights, sounds and smells as the Realm stalks the Pattern Web to locate what the character seeks. Silvery tendrils grow from the disk to form pathways ending in new disks.

At each disk the speaker finds some representation of the connection between her and her desire. It may be some shared history, an obstacle or foe that stood in her way, or a perspective of what the item means to her. The Storyteller decides what she encounters, and creates a scene for the character or pack that either strengthens their resolve or changes their perspective.

The character overcomes each scene and repeats her request or adds additional detail. New tendrils and paths form again and the process repeats while the pack walks the silvery web. When the character overcomes the Realm's final

challenge the pack arrives at a disk where a glittering Moon Bridge awaits. The pack can refuse to take this first Moon Bridge and continue searching, hoping to learn more about their quest. The Realm reinterprets their request, trying to find alternative answers, which may be different from what the pack originally sought.

Characters in the Search Engine make an extended Wits + Enigmas roll, difficulty based on which Umbral plane the target is located, and minimum successes dependent on its specificity and rarity. Success and failure both bring new paths, with insightful scenes on successes and irrelevant or confusing challenges for failures. A botch indicates the pack has chanced across a corrupted junction where a portal opens but all paths behind them disappear. Their only choice is to step through to where it leads. The Storyteller decides what waits through the portal but it will likely be inconvenient and dangerous – the Abyss, the caern of a hostile sept, a Black Spiral Dancer hive, or a nest of Banes.

Achieving the minimum successes opens a Moon Bridge that leads to within ten miles of the target, with each success beyond the minimum reducing the distance by one mile. Refusing a Moon Bridge increases the difficulty by 1 for each subsequent roll. Failing a roll after refusing a Moon bridge closes off additional choice to the pack – the exit provided is the last one they will get.

Target Location	Difficulty	Rarity	Successes Required
Near Umbra	6	Common	5
Penumbra	7	Uncommon	10
Deep Umbra	8	Uncommon	15
Physical Reality	9	Unique	20

Synesthesia

The Realm of Synesthesia warps every sensory interpretation. Eyes hear intense noise from vibrant images, ears taste sweet or savory sound, the mouth feels flavors as texture and pressure, the skin smells every touch and caress differently, and scents fill the nose with a palette of different colored hues. This is highly disorienting to visitors but the substitution of senses can help Garou learn to better integrate all experiences and overcome the bias of favoring some senses over others.

Spirits within Synesthesia revel in the twisted sensations. No creature of flesh can fully appreciate the rush creatures of pure spirit feel here, not even half-spirit creations like the Garou. As far as anyone can tell the Realm is Earth-like beneath the strange sensations, with areas of wilderness and urban sprawl, but with no native residents. Synesthesia exists to be experienced and visitors are free to roam within its borders without interference from emanations accustomed to the Realm's conditions.

Storytellers portraying this Realm should twist descriptions from what players expect. Werewolves place particular importance on scent, sight and sound. Emphasize the changes to these senses. Words and conversations appear as taste sensations on the listener's tongue. Pleasant compliments and the reassuring voices of pack-mates have sweet flavors, whereas harsh phrases and curses are bitter on the palate. Looking at a fellow Garou gives a chorus of the werewolf's appearance. Her scent shows an earthy, primal-colored miasma that tells her predilections. An Ahroun Glass Walker may look like the chatter of automatic weapons fire and smell of the rich red color of blood and the dark blue-black shades of oil. A Shadow Lord Ragabash may look like the whisper of a blade pulled from its scabbard and the creak of a floorboard in an otherwise silent house, and smell of the starlit dark of a moonless night.

Synesthesia is a difficult Realm for characters to endure without slipping into confused Rage but they benefit from the experience. Each day a character spends here roll Perception + Primal Urge at difficulty 6. Success gives the character -1 difficulty to Perception rolls for one week per success. The character must also roll Willpower at difficulty 7 every day in the Realm. Failure inflicts her with a derangement that lasts for a week after she leaves Synesthesia. Successive failures either increase the time she suffers the derangement, or inflict a new derangement.

The Homelands

Every tribe has a homeland in the Near Umbra. Their precise origins are lost to time but legends speak of their creation. Some tell of epic explorations by the greatest heroes of the tribes, others speak of the tribal totems making pocket realms and calling their followers home. Whatever the truth, the homelands are a valuable resource for every tribe who can still reach theirs.

Theurges debate whether tribe shapes the homeland or homeland shapes the tribe – optimistic Garou point to the changes within various homelands as proof that the tribe is the dominant factor. These werewolves view the continued existence of the Croatan's homeland with hope.

The tribal totems maintain the homeland but don't spend all their time in these Realms. Indeed, most totems have other Realms and duties that demand their attention and delegate responsibility for the homeland to a lesser spirit or tribal elder.

The homelands are sacred places not entered lightly. In theory, every member of a tribe has the right to enter the homeland but in practice only members of Rank 4 or above may enter without question. Younger Garou usually accompany more senior werewolves and poor behavior is certain to cause loss of renown.

DISCONNECTION IN THE HOMELANDS

The tribal homeland speaks of everything it means to be Garou for a tribe. It reinforces their primal nature and the vision they have for Gaia. It strengthens both their spirit and physical beings. By bringing together both sides of the werewolf it slows the progress of Disconnection.

Members of a tribe residing in their tribal homeland only increase their difficulty for returning to the physical realm once per year, rather than with each lunar cycle.

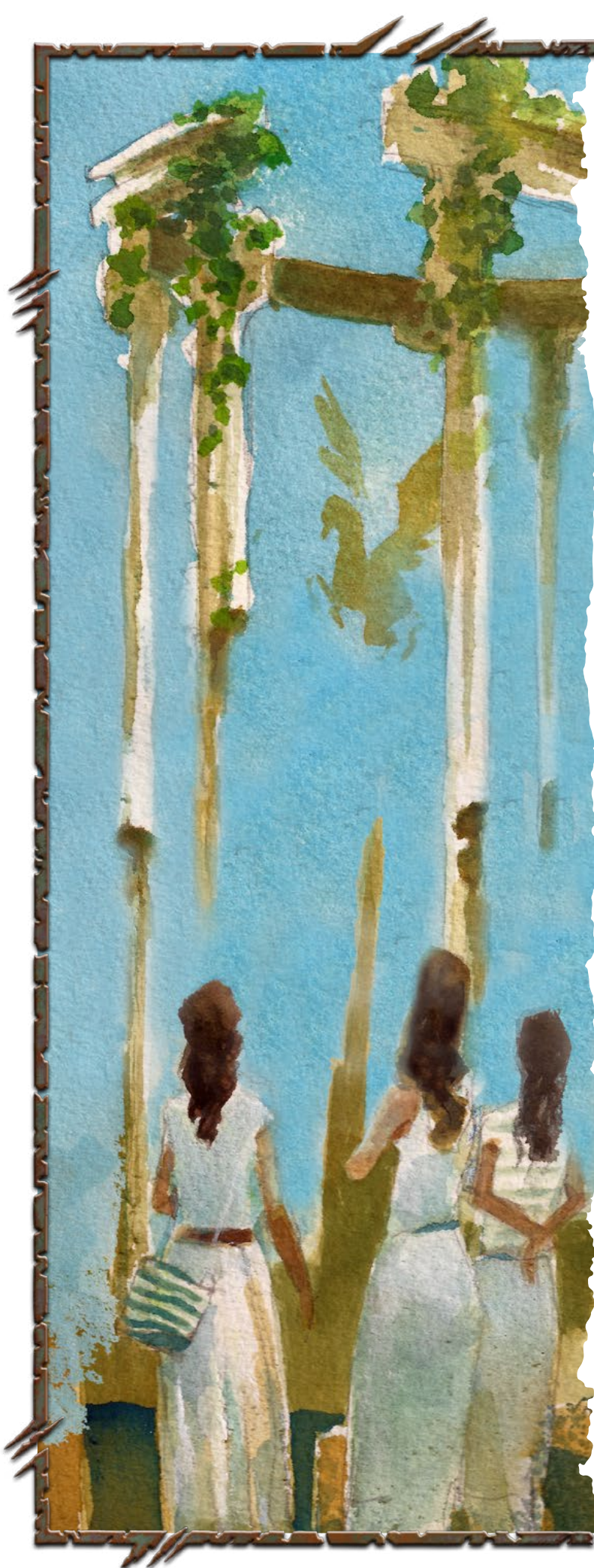
This effect is less pronounced for Garou in foreign homelands. The difficulty to return to the physical world increases by 1 for every two lunar cycles they remain in the homeland.

Disconnection is cumulative; while the werewolf is in her Homeland or the Umbra she must worry about her connection to the physical world. She can't just step into the Near Umbra from her tribal homeland to re-set the counter.

The admission of non-tribal members varies from homeland to homeland. Garou may seek any homeland but there is a difference between arriving and being welcomed. By custom, Silent Striders may wait at the borders of any homeland to request an audience. The Strider's conduct is bound by discretion and respect; transgressing these traditions opens the messenger to attack and loss of renown. Camazotz and Corax used to bring messages to the homelands, but the Wars of Rage destroyed the werabats and made the wereravens unwilling to travel to the Garou homelands.

Black Furies

The Black Furies' homeland is a pristine wilderness straight from mythical Grecian legends. Rocky mountains stretch through the clouds and fall away into wine-dark seas. Lush, fruit-laden trees fill the land between cities. All creatures live as part of nature's cycle of predator and prey with neither side being over-hunted or dying of starvation. The hunt is not forbidden for humans, though. The chase is sacred to the Furies. Humans perform the Prayer for the Prey out of respect and freely hunt across the homeland. The other predators within the Realm are just as free to hunt, and wolves, lions, and other carnivores stalk the lands, with sharks, killer whales, and other marine hunters in the sea. Humans are no more protected than are other creatures but the animal emanations only kill for food or safety.



The Furies' realm has changed over time. The architecture was almost exclusively Grecian but has adapted over the last few centuries. Now the buildings reflect styles from anywhere the Furies have borne children, which in modern times includes almost every country on Earth.

Another major shift is the presence of men in the homeland. The Furies permitted no males in the Realm until recently; they relaxed the ban for their male Metis children. This unexpectedly led to greater changes – Furies suddenly found men in the human settlements where previously there were none. The female residents don't appear to have noticed; to them nothing has changed. The Furies' initial reaction was to hunt and kill these unwelcome additions to the homeland but Pegasus forbade it. The totem has refused to explain her reasons but Elder Furies believe she is testing her tribe.

Men are still uncommon within the human population and wholly female settlements remain the norm. The tribe periodically petitions Pegasus to revoke her ban and allow a cull of the male humans. The totem refuses every request. The Furies grow increasingly frustrated at this and wonder what lesson must be learned or conditions must be met before the Incarna will relent.

Bone Gnawers

The Bone Gnawer homeland is covered with crumbling, low-rent inner-city blocks surrounding a large central public park. Unlike some urbanized parks that are mostly concrete and steel, the Gnawer's area has a lush core of trees, grassland and plants. True to its Bone Gnawer ownership the grasses are overgrown and strewn with weeds, the roots of the trees push upwards from the ground as they tangle over each other, and the shrubs and flowers are unkempt and grow haphazardly. Occasionally a particularly industrious Gnawer will try to tidy the gardens but the greenery is more tenacious than even the most patient werewolf.

The city blocks have crumbling facades and exposed brickwork in desperate need of fresh mortar. Dumpsters overflow in the dark alleyways and are always good for a quick (and free) meal of cast-off high-fat, high-sugar junk. Fast food restaurants and cafés are open 24 hours every day and all serve cheap beer by the pitcher. Strip joints are on every block, but the canny Gnawer knows the best are found in back alleyways, by knocking on the right doors.

The city blocks stretch on seemingly forever and don't get any better. The old subway system connecting the neighborhoods always runs late. The stations have broken turnstiles and overweight, slow security guards, so only the slowest, dumbest or most drunken Garou doesn't ride for free. The deepest platforms of the subway system have trains that stop at stations in other urbanized Realms, notably the Glass Walkers' homeland and the CyberRealm.

Rat Gafflings swarm throughout the Realm and are a great source of gossip and rumor. They will even perform tasks in exchange for the right chiminage. These spirits can find food and shelter in the homeland just as easily as the Gnawers, so treats and trinkets brought from outside are more valued than anything within the Realm. The spirits also prize new pieces of gossip. Some Bone Gnawers have recently taken to recruiting pigeon spirits as their spies and messengers. This has created some tension among Rat's brood but the Gnawers think the competition will drive down prices. The cash-strapped Gnawers appreciate a spirit willing to negotiate a bargain.

The Bone Gnawers have a reputation for being found among the dregs of society and can operate in other tribe's territories by living beneath the notice of the loftier werewolves. The Gnawer homeland enjoys a surprising connectivity to the homelands of other tribes. As well as the subway connecting it to technological Realms, the Bone Gnawers know many passageways hidden in the crumbling basements of condemned buildings and back alleys. Any homeland with a notable amount of construction and urbanization likely has a few paths the Bone Gnawers can use.

Children of Gaia

The Children of Gaia enjoy a verdant paradise for a homeland with wide-open plains, lush woodlands, rolling hills and bubbling streams meandering through the valleys. Delirium-free human tribes travel in caravans across the homeland. The humans tell fond stories of their werewolf protectors as they look up to the stars of the night sky and enjoy the gentle moonlight.

The water courses all eventually feed into a pair of rivers that flow through the center of the Realm. Along these rivers, called Euphrates and Tigris after their real-world counterparts, are five idealized versions of the metropolises of ancient Sumer.

The Children of Gaia have free passage anywhere in the Realm. City gates stand open and welcoming and the nomadic caravans keep extra food, drink and gifts to present to the Garou whenever they grace the humans with their presence.

Rarely a traveler may spy a unicorn in the lightly-wooded forests, or even a herd grazing on the grasslands. The creatures are shy and easily spooked, but someone who approaches openly, honestly and with no violence in their heart can befriend the animals.

The Children of Gaia use the human population to test new ideas to introduce on Earth. The tribe debates and seeks non-violent means to achieve its goals. Other Garou point out the Children's model is flawed as the humans here are well-disposed towards listening and cooperating with werewolves, and are willing to exhaust other avenues to avoid violence. The Children of Gaia counter that they are very willing to test their ideas on the human populations of other tribes' homelands. So far their offer has had no takers.

The Children welcome other shapeshifters visiting their homeland as long as these travelers have peaceful intentions. They gift other shapeshifters with a unicorn anamae as guide and companion for their visit. Outsiders who violate the Children's hospitality quickly find out that, while they strive for peace, the Children of Gaia's claws and teeth are as sharp as any Garou's.

Fianna

The Fianna homeland appears as a slice of Europe drawn from the traditions of historical fantasy novels. Rich plant life abounds in these verdant lands. The hills and valleys run wild with animals that drink from the crystal clear streams and rivers without fear. Forests cover much of the homeland and range from light and inviting to thick and foreboding. Within these forests dwell faeries of the woods; some are playful and welcoming, others are malicious and terrifying. Their alien needs make any encounter with them potentially dangerous. The faeries are wary of offending werewolves — they know how quickly embarrassment turns violent — but even Garou are not immune to the predations of the Fair Folk. Though they are emanations, the fae in the Fianna homeland are just as tricky as the true fae.

Deer thrive in the forests and grasslands. Hunters must show respect for their prey and consume what they kill. Stag despises wasteful hunting in his domain; he has been known to summon the Wild Hunt on foolish hunters who killed for pleasure or hunted beyond what they required.

The sounds of music, laughter and revelry frequently drift across the homeland. Spontaneous celebrations are common in the homeland and tend to draw together anyone within earshot. Sometimes the laughter and merriment dies away. In its place, the baying of hounds, the screams of dying, and the horn-calls of the Wild Hunt. The Hunt easily slips between the homeland and the Arcadia Gateway, scouring both lands for traces of the Wyrms. If the Hunt happens across Garou it offers them the chance to join. The hunters mock and deride Garou who refuses but usually leave them in peace. Sometimes the Hunt harries the werewolf until it can find something more fitting of its attention.

Get of Fenris

The homeland of the Get of Fenris is the harshest of all the European-descended tribes. A permanent, bitter winter cloaks this Realm. Barren tundra comprises most of the land. Only the hardiest shrubs and grasses can grow here and these provide poor sustenance to the herds of mammoth that roam the Realm. Cold, dark taiga borders the tundra and steep fjords divide the lands, daring the Get to test their resilience by crossing the icy waters.

Packs of dire wolves roam the wilds, fighting for survival against the never-ending cold. These predators live forever on the verge of starvation and will hunt and attack any source of

meat they can take down – including werewolves. They are smart enough to stay clear of the lodges where the Get gather to carouse, fight and tell tales of their glory, but solitary Garou on tests of stamina or exiled by their lodge are fair game.

The lodges form the nexus of Get homeland society. Philosophical and ideological disagreements separate the lodges; non-Get have difficulty seeing the difference. To the Get these differences are vast gulfs that provide perfect excuse for each to prove its merits through combat. Opposing lodges frequently clash upon the icy plains. The winning lodge has the superior philosophy – at least until the next conflict.

These battles are fierce and bloody as befits the Get, but Fenris will not allow his tribe to destroy itself through them. Any felled Garou lies at the point of death on the cold rocks until he can find the strength to drag his near-dead carcass back to his lodge. His pack may assist but this is a sure sign of weakness; a true Get would rather endure weeks crawling with his entrails dragging behind him than accept help. Once within a lodge, a single night's sleep restores the victim to health, no matter how grievous the wounds.

Fenris knows blood must sometimes be permanently spilled between brothers. The Get challenge each other to formal duels that do not benefit from the protection from death. Duels can only be declared between lodge skirmishes and are public spectacles that entire lodges turn out to observe. The duelists set the terms of battle and no Garou may interfere. Fenris will punish transgressors harshly.

Glass Walkers

The Glass Walkers homeland takes its appearance from idealized dreams of the perfect City. It's a world where technology enhances life and the Weaver and Wyld live in perfect harmony.

The entire realm is urbanized and covered in structures ranging from skyscrapers to experimental arcologies, whose marvelous engineering allows them to rise far through the clouds and brush the heavens. To non-Glass Walkers the homeland looks like it is choked by the Weaver; another sterile CyberRealm in the making.

The Walkers disagree with the other tribes about their home's worth. The City is filled with efficient, businesslike humans who spend their lives in engineering marvels of glittering steel and glass. Each structure has dozens of open-air garden levels brimming with vegetation and the birds and animals that are naturally attracted to these plants. Each garden caters to a different ecology; one floor may have a cool climate rainforest while another showcases steamy jungle, and a third has hardy plants and abundant reptiles of the arid desert. The largest towers have entire nature preserves spread across multiple levels with walkways and wilderness corridors crisscrossing between towers. Here animals and plants live in harmony with technology and humanity. Waterfalls tumble down the outside of the towers to splash into pools below.

Fish and birds enjoy the crystal clear water in these pools. These natural areas have pathways and meeting places, and encourage humans to come and enjoy nature within the city.

Many humans telecommute for their employment and happily spend their lives within just a few towers. Everywhere has access to super-fast wireless networking and it is a simple matter for the population to stay connected via augmented reality and smart technologies. Those who need to travel further do so via transport tubes or non-polluting electric vehicles and maglev trains. The trains run with clockwork precision through the City on raised platforms and occasionally dip below ground into a clean and ordered subway system. This system connects the Glass Walkers homeland with that of the Bone Gnawers. The trains of both Realms have no trouble operating across the different technology levels, and Garou can easily see – and smell – which Realm they are about to step into.

The Glass Walkers have had to work harder than predicted over the last few years. Maintaining the balance between Wyld and Weaver is more difficult than they thought. Many of the Realm's more miraculous technologies simply cease to work without regular maintenance, and the gardens have a tendency to overgrow and encroach into the structures whenever possible. The Walkers have tried to automate as many of the repairs as they can, but so far they have found no adequate substitute for personal attention and manual labor.

Red Talons

The Red Talon homeland is a hostile nightmare to homid sensibilities and that's fine as far as the Talons are concerned. The rare homid Garou who visits must have a respected Red Talon chaperone, or have someone close to Griffin vouch for her, or she will find herself hunted.

The predator is king in the dense, tangled forests that fill the entire Realm. A confusing cacophony of shrieks, hoots, whistles, hisses and roars from almost every kind of beast call out from the shadows.

The jumbled noise only falls briefly silent when the wolves howl. Savage packs roam through the forests, confident in their supremacy. These packs are so successful that their populations have swollen to unsustainable levels. The wolves have out-competed other predators in the realm and decimated the prey. The Red Talons are only just starting to realize that the prey-emanations are dying out. Worse still, they are finding substantial numbers of dead predators who were obviously felled by wolves. In many cases nothing is left but bone and scraps, where the wolves have eaten their competitors.

The only solution the Red Talons have thought of is to cull the wolf population and this is something they refuse to consider. They blame the Realm's overpopulation on the dwindling wolf population in the physical world, reasoning that each wolf killed there results in another wolf in the homeland. In this way, the Talons sidestep criticism of their homeland, and have found yet another reason to blame humans for their woes.



The Talons argue that if they had their way, they would expand the wolf population on Earth and cull the humans to return balance to both Realms. Other visitors are not as convinced but know that even raising the issue would lead to violence.

The rise of the wolf population is not the only overgrowth in this realm. The dense forest threatens to turn to an impenetrable jungle with the unstoppable plant growth. Trees grow close together with barely enough room for a lupus to squeeze past, and vines and undergrowth tangle and block all but the most-traveled paths. The Talons believe this is another indication of the hated imbalance brought about by humans. They whisper that the Wyld has no other refuge to escape persecution and they must nurture it; the Red Talon homeland has simply taken in too much of its energies.

Shadow Lords

The Great Mountain dominates the Realm of the Shadow Lords. This names both the highest peak in the range and the imposing fortress that stands atop it. Thunderstorms rumble across the sky, casting shadows over everything. These reverberations remind the Shadow Lords of Grandfather Thunder's constant oppressive vigilance.

Below the mountain ranges the homeland is full of dark, forbidding forests, foothills covered in great jagged outcrops, and crashing rivers with bone-shattering waterfalls. Storm-crows roost in the treetops and the various Shadow Lord

enclaves use them as messengers and spies. To the north is a forbidding sea where legend tells of a great kingdom of ancestor-spirits on the far shore, who gave rise to both the modern tribe and their Hakken cousins. No recent expeditions have managed to find these fabled lands but new heroes try every few years to see what they can find.

On each lesser mountain peak stands another mighty fortress, home to one of the greatest living Shadow Lords. Within these walls Machiavellian werewolves plot to gain control of their rivals' fortresses, while confounding similar schemes from their lessers. From here they rule armies of wolf and human emanations and command elite packs of Garou sworn to their service. Many younger Shadow Lords pledge allegiance to one of these great masters for a time. In exchange for service and courage they gain valuable experience in the Shadow Lord arts of warfare and conquest.

Shadow Lords covet the right to rule the Great Mountain above all else. According to Shadow Lord legend, the one who controls the fortress will become ruler of the entire Garou Nation. The few non-Shadow Lords who know of this legend do not mention its self-serving nature nor the fact that it does not specify a Shadow Lord must be the one to claim the Great Mountain.

Many Lords have tried to take the Great Mountain but it has confounded every attempt. Most have approached it

with armies via narrow mountain paths that lead through its defenses. Some have sought to scale the rugged mountainside. Others have tried more fanciful techniques such as flight, or exploring secret passageways within each lesser fortress that some say lead to the Great Mountain. Most attempts still end with death or disappearance. A few Garou who have returned suffer incurable madness. Others appear to be intact but it soon becomes apparent their outlook has changed. These Shadow Lords withdraw from politics and quietly abscond from their hard-won domains to return to the physical realm. Their honor, courage and prowess are strong but their thirst for conspiracy is shattered. None of these unfortunates have spoken of what they encountered, but they tend to be viewed with wary disdain by other Shadow Lords. Clearly they were unworthy of glory in Grandfather Thunder's eyes.

Despite these centuries of failure, no shortage of young, headstrong Shadow Lords are willing to try to claim the Great Mountain.

Silver Fangs

The Silver Fangs' homeland favors majesty and nobility above all, as expected of the first among tribes. Magnificent castles dominate the landscape, overlooking temperate steppes and rich woods from their hilltop vantages. Bountiful game provides excellent hunting opportunities for the Fangs. Serfs hunt the plains and fish the rivers and lakes; hunting the woods is forbidden to them. The beneficence of the Fangs ensures the peasants don't miss out on the bounty of the forests. The Garou keep the best parts of the kill and gift the leftover spoils to others.

Individual families of Silver Fangs may relax these rules within their fiefdoms or enforce new laws, but other lords watch any changes closely. Custom and tradition have suited the Silver Fang homeland for centuries. The elders grant younger Garou some leeway — they remember the rambunctiousness of youth — but expect them to quickly outgrow such frivolity.

All Silver Fangs in the homeland receive a Falcon Gaffling to act as messenger, guide and herald. When a Silver Fang travels, his Gaffling flies ahead of his retinue to ensure proper protocols and obeisance await his arrival. The Fangs tolerate visitors from other tribes but do not grace them with a spirit herald. The Fangs understand the demands of noblesse oblige and the benevolence they must extend to the lesser tribes. The presence or absence of the Gafflings is an easy guide for servants to discern true nobles from pretenders.

Within the center of the realm is the Castle of Heroes, which only Silver Fangs may enter. Monuments glorify heroes of the tribe and great tapestries depict their greatest legends. Here Silver Fangs hold great tribal banquets to lift their weary spirits and take comfort among others who understand the heavy burden of true leadership.

Decay is taking hold of this Realm, though the Silver Fangs remain blind to it. Castle walls crumble, trees rot and hunts return with less bounty than ever before. Visitors to

the realm can see the faded, torn banners that adorn the castles and note that tales of heroism and leadership are ages old — no family sings new stories of modern heroes. Some tribes are concerned by the decline of the Silver Fangs, while others watch like predators and bide their time to strike.

Stargazers

The Stargazers' homeland is a place given to contemplate what it means to be Garou. This differs between individuals but all can find something that speaks to their inner self. Those rare few Stargazers who can't find this inner harmony usually haven't yet found the right part of the homeland. For some, the journey itself is the point where they find balance.

The landscape is simple and ordered. Snow-capped mountains higher than the Himalayas occupy the center of the Realm. A ring of foothills surround the base of these peaks, covered in luscious grasslands or majestic forests. Another ring surrounds the foothills in radiating patterns of steppes and plains. Beyond these are discrete climatic regions catering for the birth lands of every Stargazer; deserts sit bare next to tropical jungles, which lay beside cool-climate rainforests. Each region has shrines for meditating and challenges that train a werewolf to take full advantage of each form.

The homeland is accommodating to Stargazer needs. Most seek quiet meditation and find solitude. Garou seeking companionship find others of similar disposition. Elder mentors educating younger Stargazers is the most frequently found grouping.

At the center of the Stargazer homeland is a gateway to the Astral Umbra — a circle of rough-hewn stone atop the highest mountain peak. Within this circle snow doesn't fall and the wind doesn't blow. From here a Garou can see across the entire homeland and begin to appreciate the relationship between the different climate zones. Meditating on this connectivity gives an understanding of the Realm's conceptual linkages and reveals a koan hidden within — answering the koan leads to the Astral Umbra, where the werewolf swims in the sea of concepts. Her Rage and Gnosis are harmonized within her sense of self and don't antagonize the native thought denizens. The journey to the Astral Umbra leaves the werewolf's body comatose and vulnerable while her mind roams free. Chimera's servants watch over the bodies of travelers but can do nothing to bring the Garou back should she overstay and her mindless body begin to wither. Many Stargazers have died while exploring pure conceptual thought, lost to endless contemplation of meaning and oblivious to the wasting of their neglected bodies.

The homeland also has substantial crossover with the Dream Zone. It is a simple matter to slip from anywhere in the homeland to the Dream Zone through meditation or sleep.

Uktena

The Uktena homeland encompasses a diverse mix of North American climates and terrain. The boundaries blur

between the lands so deciduous forests grow within expansive prairies that also house rocky deserts and snow-capped mountains. The modern Uktena have spread across the earth and intermingled with people of distant lands. The homeland now incorporates every Uktena birth land. The environmental mishmash includes fragments of volcanic Japanese mountains and Mongolian steppes, rainforests of South America and savannah plains of Africa.

The Uktena use their homeland as an extension of their role as collectors of secrets. The homeland contains spirits of extinct creatures, embodiments of forgotten myths and secrets of lost cultures. The Uktena gathered the remnant emanations of lost Native American tribes that scattered before European expansion. Now the last ancestor spirits of these tribes dwell only in the homeland. Unique mythical creatures and heroes of Native American lore also make their homes in the Realm and trade secrets with the Uktena for continued protection. The Uktena remember and nurture these last remnants and save them from the final oblivion of the Abyss.

The Uktena fight the Abyss, and their homeland is the beachhead in this war. The homeland has a passageway to the Abyss buried deep in a great canyon. The Uktena use it to quest for lost scraps of memory before they disappear forever. Every piece of lore they recover is a victory against oblivion. These raiding parties use secret rituals to keep the path open so they can escape with their stolen treasures. The Abyss does not give up its secrets easily and these rituals sometimes fail, leaving the packs to find other ways to escape the Wyrms-ridden Realm.

The Uktena were one of the tribes most open to the other Changing Breeds, and still welcome Fera travelers who come with secrets to share or barter. They occasionally invite representatives of the Bastet, Corax and Nuwisha to sit in great councils to discuss lore and the ways of the spirit and have been known to summon ghosts from the Dark Umbra for their secrets.

Wendigo

The Wendigo homeland is a bitter, icy tundra with snow-cloaked mountains locked in perpetual winter. Howling blizzards whip across the landscape. Ice-caked forests provide some but not enough respite from the wind. The frozen bodies of hypothermia victims litter the ground, testament to the cruelty of this homeland.

This is exactly what the Wendigo want intruders to see.

The land is indeed cold and harsh, but uninvited visitors don't see the traditional villages built on plains blanketed in pure white snow, populated by Garou and their ancestor spirits. They don't see the pristine pine forests and the crystal clear waters that run through the homeland. This is the last untainted land of the Wendigo and the tribe will not allow it to be corrupted by outsiders.

Small numbers of cunning, well-adapted prey animals survive the harsh climate. Herds of long-extinct beasts roam the tundra foraging for vegetation. These herds are easy to track but the beasts have strong, tough hides like armor and they use coordinated attacks to confound and destroy predators. Even with such large sources of meat a werewolf must work hard to fill her belly in this Realm.

The Wendigo forbid entry to any shapeshifters except the Gurahl, to whom they feel they still owe a debt. The Uktena used to be welcome but have become too secretive and impure for the Wendigo. In past the Wendigo permitted messengers from the Camazotz and Corax; now the bats are no more and the ravens banned over some theft that soured the entire tribe – though Corax deny all allegations.

Wendigo search the aurora in the night sky for omens and prophecies. Each Auspice seeks particular inspiration and guidance from the tribal totem through this ritual. Every Wendigo must make a solo pilgrimage to the homeland and commune in person with the tribal totem before becoming an Elder of the tribe.

The homeland is surprisingly well connected to other Realms. The Wendigo use this advantage to move war parties through the Umbra for surprise attacks. From here they can travel to Pangaea, the Legendary Realm, the Aetherial Realm, the Uktena tribal homeland and numerous other minor Near Realms.

The Lost Homelands

Black Spiral Dancers

The White Howlers' homeland isn't lost to the Garou Nation but few non-Black Spiral Dancers have set foot here since the fall of the tribe. The once beautiful Realm is now a polluted post-industrial hell dripping in Wyrms-taint.

The homeland is hot and oppressive. The air is thick with smoke and ripples with heat. A sickly green sun beats down on the surface, unblocked by any kind of ozone layer. Night brings no relief as pollutants cool and sink to the surface, causing the moon to appear fluorescent yellow through the vapors. Sooty clouds drift along spreading acid rain that burns and weakens everything below.

Countless great pits surrounded by rusted metal structures sink into the depths of the cracked, stony surface. Leaking pipes pump filth around and seem to have no purpose other than to burst and spread more toxins. Sporadic corpses of fungi-caked, malformed trees spray deadly infectious spores onto the unwary. Infection spreads quickly before the victim explodes in a spray of gore and more spores.

The filth and heat is even too much for the Dancers, who avoid the surface unless necessary. They instead dwell deep underground in vast networks of black tunnels lined with luminescent fungi and flickering balefire torches, while black ichor drips from the saturated earth above.

The homeland is still connected to many other Near Realms by unreliable Moon Paths. Other Realms try to close off links to the dark homeland but Black Spiral Dancers still launch raids into Pangaea, the Arcadia Gateway and the Aetherial Realm, and an obsidian gateway leads to the entrance to the Black Spiral Labyrinth in Malfeas. Despite the most fervent efforts of the Black Spiral Dancers to close it, a shining silvery path leads from their homeland directly to Erebus.

Bunyip

The Garou nation hopes the Bunyip homeland still exists, but many assume the Realm has faded from existence. The Bunyip were secretive and isolated from their cousins when they were alive and their secrets have proven more confounding with their death.

The Silent Striders have a few old stories that recall it as a reflection of the Australian outback. These tales tell of a dry, inhospitable land of red earth and barren stretches mostly devoid of animals or people.

The homeland does include desert expanses but the Bunyip were a widely spread tribe who had kinfolk across the Australian continent. The Realm has a diverse range of climates that includes tropical mangrove forests, deep gorges, temperate bushlands, and cool rainforests. Every land where the Bunyip made their homes and sang their songs is represented here.

Dreamtime creatures and giant marsupials dwell here and hunt foreign spirits or other intruders. The tribe's ancestor spirits once roamed the land but disappeared when the last of the Bunyip died. Yahwie, the scourge of the Australian Ananasi, can summon many secret paths to the homeland and lives here when it is not haunting the Australian Penumbra. The other denizens of the Realm avoid the monster when possible as the treaties between it and the Bunyip ceased when the tribe died. Now no one knows its motives as it treads lost paths with impunity to bring violence and death wherever it goes.

The Gumagan Mokol  remember secret ways to the Bunyip's homeland, as do the Australian Nagah. These Fera are occasional visitors here and the only ones who don't risk violent retribution from the native emanations.

Garou explorers still try to find the Bunyip Realm. They hope to find secrets to help survive the coming Apocalypse. Though the Bunyip guarded the Dreamtime Umbra from the Wyrms, they passed their secrets through song and now very few spirits recall the exact singing of the Bunyip's magic.

Croatan

The Croatan homeland is eerily quiet. The tribe's sacrifice affected the Realm with a kind of Harano as it grieved their loss. The realm was once a grand expanse of landscapes capturing the essence of the Pure Lands; all that remains are plains and gentle rolling hills covered by wildflowers.

The homeland is devoid of other life with one exception. In the center of the Realm is a hill twice as large as the rest. It sometimes rumbles and shifts, disturbing the ground around it. Gaps in the soil reveal a tremendous shell covered by only a thin layer of dirt and flowers. Here Turtle slumbers, after the sacrifice of his tribe.

The rumblings come from the rare times he stirs and shifts. Some Kinfolk still carry the blood of the Croatan, and though other tribes adopted them, sometimes two Croatan Kin come together and produce a child that would be a pure Croatan were the tribe not dead. When this happens, Turtle stirs. One day such a pairing may produce a pure Croatan, who will go on to be the first of a reborn tribe. This Croatan must reclaim the homeland and wake Turtle. Whether this rebirth aids the Garou Nation or heralds the climax of the Apocalypse is unknown.

Silent Striders

The Silent Striders' homeland is cast adrift in the Umbra as an unattainable prize. According to the tribe, the curse that prevents them from entering their lands in the physical world also severed their connection with their tribal homeland. No Moon Paths lead to this Realm and so far all attempts to find it have met with failure.

The homeland still exists as one of the countless small Realms dotting the Near Umbra. The modern Striders have forgotten important details of how they lost their Realm. When the ancient evil cursed the tribe and barred them from resting in their lands the elders of the tribe suffered great shame. So great was their humiliation and anger that they summoned Sokhta from her domain in the Aetherial Realm and swore to her they would have no land to call their own until they lifted the curse. This pride was their downfall as they expected to fulfill their oath within no more than a generation. Countless years later no living Silent Strider knows the truth of their loss, but Sokhta has kept them to their word and allows no Moon Paths to enter their homeland.

The stories the Striders tell describe the homeland as resembling their ancestral home in ancient Egypt. Perpetual moonlit night cloaks the homeland's dark sands. The waters shine silver in the moon's reflected light. Great pyramids reach towards the skies, carefully aligned to highlight constellations commemorating Silent Strider heroes of old. Ancient hieroglyph-covered obelisks dot the landscape, telling the story of the Silent Striders and the history of the Garou. The dialect has been lost to modern minds but ancient spirits may recall its secrets.

The Realm is also home to the ancient ancestor spirit Wepauwet. This spirit of a once powerful Ahroun guards the homeland from intruders and patiently waits for his descendants to fulfill their oath. He also protects another forgotten secret — in tombs deep beneath the pyramids and temples the tribe's ancestor spirits lie sleeping. Should the tribe ever recover its lost homeland it would suddenly find

itself armed with ancient allies whose knowledge of forgotten arts could change the otherwise inevitable outcome of the war for Gaia.

The Changing Breeds

Most shapeshifters don't enjoy the same Umbral freedom as the Garou and don't have Realms of their own. The two surviving Fera who do are the Corax and the Nuwisha. The Ananasi, Bastet, and Nagah do have their Umbral bolt-holes, but each is an extension of its owner and is not a collective homeland for their Breed.

Sufficiently motivated explorers could find the homelands of extinct Fera adrift in the Umbra. Storytellers should design these lost Realms to suit their own chronicles.

Corax

The Corax homeland takes the shape of a giant tree with countless spreading branches filled with nooks ideally suited for nesting. The tree is a mix of different timbers and foliage representative of every land that has produced a wereraven. Helios shines brightly in the azure sky, his sunlight only interrupted by the slow drift of white clouds.

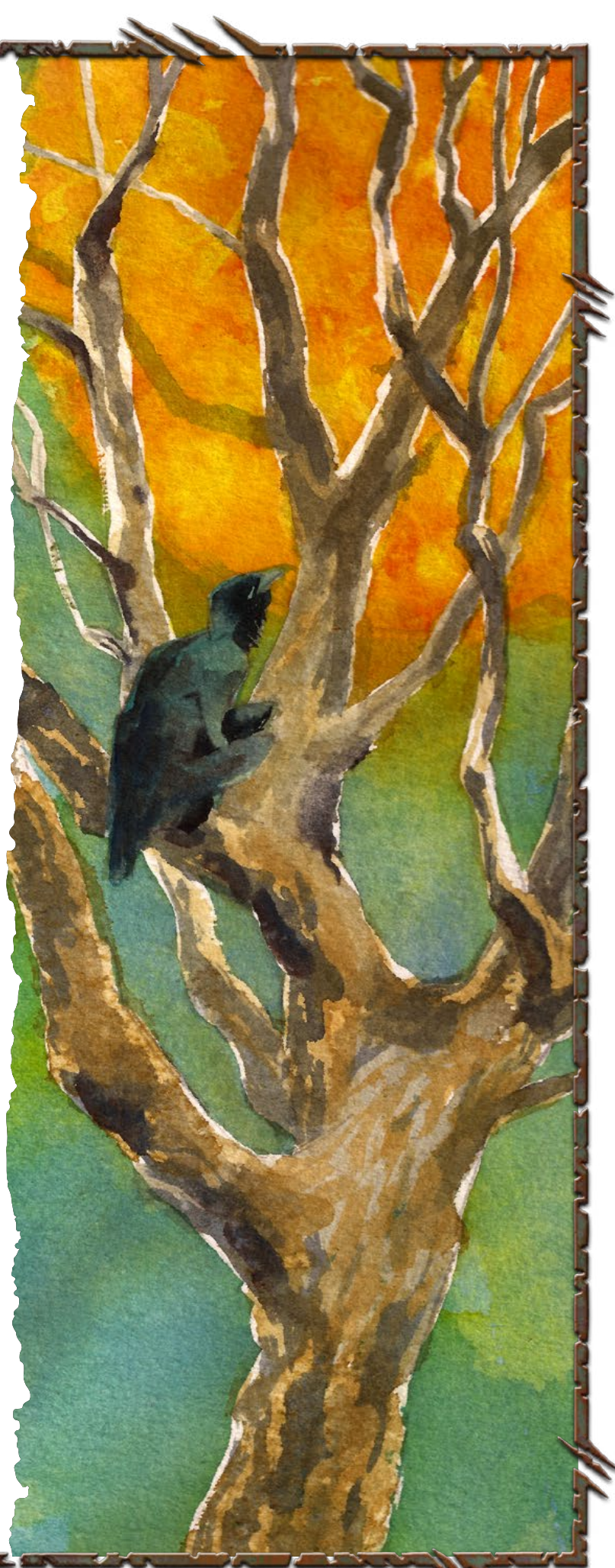
If the Corax are to be believed, the homeland has numerous gateways and paths that lead to almost every part of the Near and Deep Umbrae. As befits a breed of spies, messengers and thieves, they take great pleasure in the unequalled mobility afforded to them by this Realm. The top of the sky connects to the Aetherial Realm and a few Anchorheads the Corax find convenient. Other branches hide paths to other Realms and even lead to Garou homelands. The dark places between the tree's roots hide gateways to shadowy Realms such as the Abyss and the Atrocity Realm, and possibly even gateways to the Dark Umbra.

Nuwisha

The Nuwisha do not have a homeland as such. They have Coyote's Tunnel, though it is not tunnel shaped and Coyote rarely rests here. The entire Realm is an oval room with an enormous central table overflowing with food. The food is always fresh and gives off scents that make even the most disciplined Nuwisha — should such a creature exist — drool like a hungry dog and every werecoyote is welcome to eat to her heart's content.

Countless doors line the room. Many Nuwisha have wasted time trying to count but no matter how they mark their start point they always seem to lose track and don't know where to end. These failed attempts often cause disembodied laughter to float through the room.

Most of the doors are locked and forbidden to the Nuwisha, but sometimes will unlock for a specific werecoyote and shut again to others who might follow. The Nuwisha believe this is Coyote pranking his children and hope his motives are aimed at furthering their education.



The doors that are always unlocked open to locations across the entire Umbra. Some lead to the Realms of each of the Trickster's totems. Others link to the major Near Realms and many minor Realms. More doors lead to the Deep Umbra, the Penumbra, the Dark Umbra, the Astral and even the Dream Zone. The Nuwisha say there is a door to every Realm in the Umbra, but if this is true Coyote forbids them easy access.

The Membrane

The Membrane separates the Near and Deep Umbrae much as the Gauntlet separates the physical from the spiritual. It is a barrier that can be seen but never reached. It is visible at the far edge of the Near Umbra as a vast ribbon of dim light; a purplish-blue that fades to black as it disappears further into the distance. Umbral travelers say it appears to grow closer, but they never reach it — it remains forever in the distance.

Most explorers don't understand that this is the point where they have actually reached the Membrane. They feel as if they continue forward but they do not. The Membrane blocks all onward motion but doesn't interact with any physical sense except sight. It always appears to be in the distance and cannot be touched, tasted, heard or smelled. Magical senses — including relevant Gifts and Charms — reveal the Membrane as an inviolable limit to the infinite Near Umbra, but give no other information about it.

Travelers can bypass the Membrane in several ways, but the safest and most reliable — and the one most favored by Garou — is through an Anchorhead.

Anchorheads

The most reliable way to travel across the Membrane, Anchorheads appear as tunnels or passageways of almost any size and length. Some spontaneously-appearing, or wild, Anchorheads are so small they can only accommodate the tiniest Gafflings, while others are large enough for armies to march through. Garou stabilize Anchorheads by ritually linking them to spiritual Anchors — objects of value to the Garou ritemaster. Werewolves prefer to forge their own Anchorheads rather than stabilize wild Anchorheads. This creates a more consistent passageway with a useful size and length. Most Garou-made Anchorheads are large enough for a Crinos and take no more than a day to pass through.

Wild Anchorheads begin as near invisible holes in the Membrane; those that survive more than an hour start to form miniature Realms at their mouths. Anchorheads always feel slightly unreal as they channel the energies of both the Near and Deep Umbrae, and try to find a balance between both.

Garou are not the only beings who seek Anchorheads. Ancient, unknowable, and alien creatures in the Deep

STORY SEED: PROTECT THE ANCHORHEAD

The sept of the River Cave needs help protecting its Anchorhead. For the past several weeks it has repelled attacks from strange spirits from the Deep Umbra. So far it has fought off the assaults but its members need to rest and recover their reserves. The sept asks the pack to protect the Anchorhead in the Deep Umbra, or better yet, to track the spirits back to their lair and destroy them.

The characters find the sept's Garou and ancestor spirits not only battle-weary, but suffering some kind of progressive spiritual malaise from the spirit attacks. To give more than temporary protection to the Anchorhead, they must deal with the intermittent attacks, destroy the spirit nest, and identify and purge the early stages of possession taking hold of the sept.

Umbra hunger for the order and life of Gaia and the Near Realms. The energies flowing between Umbrae are like bait to these creatures, who may use violence, stealth or more insidious means to gain access to the Anchorhead when they happen to find one.

Crossing the Membrane

Crossing the Membrane at an Anchorhead is somewhat like stepping sideways. Rather than a reflective surface, the Garou meditates on the connection across the Membrane and rolls Gnosis with a difficulty of 8 for a wild Anchorhead, 6 for a stabilized one. The Storyteller may modify this difficulty according to the use and care of the Anchorhead. An Anchorhead ritually purified after each use would reduce the difficulty by 1, whereas a constantly-used Anchorhead with no down-time would increase the difficulty by 1 or more.

All stabilized Anchorheads — and even some wild Anchorheads — develop a theme at their mouths. This theme can be anything that evokes a tunnel or passageway, such as a deep green sea pool where the waters swirl to a central funnel and are drawn down into the depths. Engaging with the theme — the character leaps into the chill water and experiences near drowning — reduces the difficulty by 1. Characters do not have to engage with the theme. They can sense and use the connection between anchors and pass through the passageway — arriving at the destination dry and not gasping for air — but doing so risks degrading the Anchorhead.

Success results in the character passing across the Membrane. If she engaged with the theme she experiences this accordingly — such as being wet and cold as described above. If she did not she simply feels stretched for a moment before appearing on the other side of the Membrane.

Failure on this roll means the character must wait an hour before trying again; others can use the pathway in this time. A botch indicates the character has somehow interfered with the connection. Increase difficulty to use the Anchorhead by 2 until it is ritually purified. A wild Anchorhead will collapse if disturbed by a botch.

Disconnection in Anchorheads

Garou are creatures of both spirit and flesh and must balance their time in both worlds. Anchorheads offer no respite against Disconnection. For this reason septs frequently bind their ancestor or other allied spirits to the Anchorhead for ongoing protection and supplement this with rotating packs to guard and patrol the pathway. The Garou understand the onset of Disconnection with each cycle of the moon, and septs dedicated to maintaining Anchorheads try to minimize the time each werewolf stands guard.

Septs often establish Moon Bridges between the Anchorhead and elsewhere to reduce travel times. The destination is usually closer to physical reality and helps maximize the time the Garou can spend actively tending the Anchorhead. Most Moon Bridges connect the Anchorhead to the ground level of the Aetherial Realm. Some connect to the homelands of their tribes and a rare few link directly to caerns in physical reality.

Although part of the Anchorhead is housed within the Deep Umbra, the entire construct has enough Near Umbra energy that the onset of Disconnection progresses as if the werewolf was within the Near Umbra. Some Garou take advantage of the Deep Umbra's immunity to Disconnection (p. 103) to stave off its progression, but this merely delays the onset and does not reset the count. Stepping from the Anchorhead to the Deep Umbra also carries the risk of encountering whatever lurks nearby.

New Anchorheads

Making new Anchorheads is difficult and dangerous. The Rite of Anchoring the Divide must simultaneously breach the Membrane from both sides, but is not complicated to perform. At least two Garou must cooperate to perform the rite, with one in the Near Umbra and the other in the Deep Umbra. The character in the Near Umbra has the simpler task — the features of the Near Umbra are familiar enough to serve as landmarks. The character working in the Deep Umbra has a much more difficult task. She must locate a reasonably defensible portion of the Membrane, coordinate the performance of the rite at the correct time, and find protections from hostile spirits while she performs the rite.

STORY SEED: A NEW ANCHORHEAD

A sept has asked the characters to assist in building a new Anchorhead. The pack is offered tasks depending on individual characters' strengths. Assisting the rite is a challenge that involves practicing with the ritemaster and other participants before the long journey through the spirit world.

If the characters are very lucky, they will be working on the Near Umbral side. If not, they must negotiate passage through an existing Anchorhead and find their way to the correct location in the Deep Umbra.

The nascent Anchorhead must be protected and maintained. Its anchors are most vulnerable — they are always noticeable to anyone using the path. The small Realms that form at each end of the Anchorhead can take on almost any appearance as long as it is representative of a pathway or tunnel.

Rite of Anchoring the Divide

Level Five Caern Rite

This is a variation of the Rite of Caern Building that links two parts of the spirit world rather than the physical and spirit worlds. It also draws the attention of spirits but these will not necessarily be minions of the Wyrms. The Storyteller decides if these onlookers have hostile intentions or are merely curious.

This rite is simultaneously performed on both sides of the Membrane. Ritemasters must find ways of synchronizing their steps. Some use Gifts to link skilled drummers who beat the time on both sides, others experiment with time-piece fetishes that keep time with each other no matter the distance between them.

An object of value — the anchor — is ritually divided in two. The rite's magic cleanly breaks the anchor regardless of how difficult it would normally be to cleave. Many ritemasters favor Pathstones (W20, p207) but any object they value will work.

If the rite succeeds, an Anchorhead opens between the anchors — both appear whole again. Close examination reveals the restored half is ghost-like and unreal. If either one is destroyed, the Anchorhead instantly collapses. Small Realms start to form around the mouths of the new Anchorhead; within a few hours they develop a theme according to the natures and subconscious desires of the ritemasters.

System: Each ritemaster makes an extended Wits + Rituals roll, difficulty 8. Each roll takes one hour performing the rite. Storytellers may modify the difficulty depending on steps taken by the ritemasters to synchronize their actions.

Each ritemaster requires five successes. If one ritemaster gains the required successes before the other she must continue her ritual — and rolling the dice — until the other ritemaster succeeds. If at any time either ritemaster botches, not only does the rite fail, but his half of the anchor becomes spiritually disrupted and no longer suitable to form an Anchorhead.

Example Anchorheads

The Storyteller should detail Anchorheads as elaborately as the chronicle requires. Frequently-visited Anchorheads, or those that are focal points of a chronicle, should be evocative and encourage characters to engage with their theme. The Storyteller should also describe key personalities found tending to the Anchorhead, and the attitude they hold to their visitors. The following examples demonstrate how widely Anchorheads and their keepers can differ, while still all being essential tools to the Garou nation.

Dimensional Portal

The Dimensional Portal sits deep underground in a bright, fluorescent-lit chamber. Electrical cables snake across the floor, walls, and ceiling of the cave, held in place by bolts drilled into the rock. Uniformed soldiers patrol the chamber armed with modern weaponry and Glass Walker ancestor spirits act as officers to command these emanations.

The portal is a large circle carved into the far wall of the chamber. Seemingly random runes mark its surface and glow with power when the Anchorhead is active. The anchors for this passage are two polished rubies as large as a fist, embedded on a dais several yards in front of each rock portal. These rubies bleed inner light when touched or when someone passes through the gate.

When activated, the runes glow in patterns of blue, green, and red, and the featureless rock within the circle swirls and melts into a cool, semi-reflective liquid. Travelers stepping into this feel inexorably pulled along, and see glittering star trails whipping past them at impossible speeds. The journey always seems to take no more than a few heartbeats regardless of its actual duration. When the character arrives at her destination the liquid rock suddenly solidifies with an audible pop and the runes flare before fading to black.

The Deep Umbral side of the Anchorhead is another cave, somewhat smaller than the Near Umbral terminus. This side is more sparsely lit and dirtier than its counterpart. Water drips from the ceiling into permanent, salt-encrusted pools. A garrison force made up of Garou and ancestor spirits protects this entry from the alien creatures that sometimes find the Anchorhead.

An all-Glass Walker sept maintains the Dimensional Portal. These Garou do not forbid other tribes from using the Anchorhead but are conscious that most werewolves are uncomfortable with the Realm's theme. The Glass Walkers fear that Garou who can't embrace it will permanently disrupt the gateway. Nobody knows if they are correct in their belief but the sept spends additional time performing ritual maintenance on the Anchorhead each time a more traditional Garou uses it.

The mouth of the cavern leads into impenetrable darkness. The Glass Walkers can summon Moon Bridges here that rapidly take travelers to a fortified bunker dug into one of the cloud-mountains at the foot of the Aetherial Realm.

River Rapids

A fire-pit sits on smooth sand, watching over a pebble-filled stream. Crystal-clear water slowly flows around the curve. The fire burns low and the scent of cooking fish wafts through the air. The sound of birdsong comes from trees standing back from the river shores. Beneath the warbles and twitters there is always the distant roar of rushing, crashing water.

A mixed sept of Uktena and Wendigo protect this Anchorhead. They have set up camp within the comfortably cool forest lining the waterway and pass the time between patrols and intruders by telling stories of the Pure Lands and singing the old songs of tribal heroes. Bound earth and air elementals supplement the Realm's security. Unwelcome visitors find the land turning against them — buffeting winds keep them unbalanced and sting their flesh while sudden, unpredictable sinkholes swallow the invaders and vanish as quickly as they appeared.

The Deep Umbral side of the Anchorhead is eerily identical to the Near Umbral. The Garou have a second, identical camp here and rotate duties between each side weekly.

The Anchorhead reveals the direction and time since the last use with the river's flow. The active Anchorhead is a rushing torrent that slows after use. The waters barely flow if they are unused for a week.

Two large boulders carved with the Song of Three Brothers, act as anchors for this Anchorhead. When the portal is active these boulders shake and stir the waters and the boulders' story sings out over the roar of the rushing river.

Characters embracing the theme of the Anchorhead float in the waters and move with the current. The waters accelerate quickly when the Anchorhead is activated and the character is swept along at a hair-raising pace, tumbling over waterfalls and smashing against rocks hidden beneath the white water. These impacts hurt but do no real damage. Similarly, the current may drag the character beneath the water, but the Anchorhead will not permit her to drown.

After the journey is nearly done she falls over one last waterfall and then finds the waters calm and bring her gently to a familiar bend where they deposit her onto the shore of the second camp.



Briar Patch

The Anchorhead's Realm is dark woods made up of thick-trunked trees, within which a dense patch of tangled, thorn-covered vines waits. If approached from the right direction, this mass of brambles reveals a gap that might have been forced open by the passage of animals. This is the entrance to the Anchorhead.

The Briar Patch is controlled by an exclusively lupus sept dominated by Red Talons. The Anchorhead gateway is smaller than most others, only just large enough to fit a werewolf in Lupus form. Even bulkier wolves can expect to lose some fur and blood to the thorns if they try to use this passage.

Only one constructed place exists in this small Realm. A clearing lined with claw-carved totemic idols holds the sept's caern. Here the Garou gather to enact their rites and meet with their brethren who hope to use the gateway. From this caern the guardians can call up Moon Bridges that lead to a ghostly, cloudy forest in a valley of the Aetherial Realm.

The sept prefers no homid steps within the Realm, as they believe the ape's presence upsets the balance of the

pathway. They have previously refused use of the Anchorhead to Garou who arrived in Homid form, or worse, refused to shift to Lupus when requested.

The shape and size of the Anchorhead tunnel makes it incredibly difficult to use in any form but Lupus. The barbed vines shift and stretch under foot. Paws can delicately step between the thorns and wolves can adjust their balance across four feet, whereas other forms must crawl in the cramped space and find the thorns tearing into their flesh. The main root of the vine claws into the dirt at the foot of the entrance. This primary root is the anchor and its destruction would kill the vines and close the Anchorhead.

The Anchorhead doesn't remain so difficult for the entire passage. The bramble entrance runs slightly downwards for a dozen yards before it reaches cool, well-trampled dirt. The journey to the exit appears to require around an hour of walking before the dirt floor ends and the thorny vines head up again. The subjective time may stretch out even longer for Garou not in Lupus form, and takes an especially long time for those in Homid.

The Deep Umbral side of the Anchorhead is almost the same as its counterpart. The sept has called on the

assistance of great Wolf spirits to protect the Anchorhead. These wolves lurk among the trees and growl threateningly at travelers but are rarely seen.

Other Passageways

Anchorheads are the most reliable means of crossing to the Deep Umbra but they are not the only way. Beings knowledgeable of the Weaver's ways understand that the Pattern Web connects everything except the most chaotic Wyld reaches or most corrupt Wyrms blights. Every area that has a hint of structure or form has at least a few strands of the Weaver's influence that travelers can use as a thread to cross between worlds — if they can survive the Pattern Spiders who maintain it.

The Wyrms' minions seldom have easy access to Anchorheads; they maintain few of their own and are not usually prepared to commit resources to steal a passageway every time they wish to travel. The Wyrms sometimes gifts its minions with the ability to bore tunnels through the Membrane. These decayed, corrupted tunnels require considerable energy to complete, but each breach brings the Membrane closer to its eventual destruction.

The Dream Zone can lure in characters who sleep in the Penumbra or Near Umbra. Sometimes the character has vivid dreams where she finds a door or portal. If she passes through it she enters ever more intense and chaotic dreams with more doors and more gateways. If she follows these to their end, she wakes to find her spirit floating free in the Deep Umbra. This method of travel is particularly dangerous, as it leaves her body vulnerable to anyone who finds it. A trail of thinnest silver connects her body and spirit, and anyone who finds it can use it to cross through the Membrane.

The Astral Umbra

The entirety of the Astral Umbra is comprised of thoughts and concepts. Each area, structure, and item is made real by a collective consciousness thinking of those things. It is the conceptual representation of the world, filled with ideas, hopes, fears, and emotions. The Astral is not beholden to the laws of the physical realm like the other Umbrae, though it is limited by thought and imagination.

The Garou know very little about the Astral Umbra, and what they do know comes from loremasters who dwell on the notions of thought and theory. Some Uktena believe the Astral Umbra is made up of the living dreams of the world, since they often encounter it by passing through the Dream Zone. The idea has a bit of credence as ideas born of dreams do pass through the Astral. The Astral is much more than just dreams, though. Every thought, ridiculous concept, flight of fancy, complex mathematical theory or

incongruous physics problem can be found within the Astral Umbra. Stargazers tell stories that anything a werewolf can think of is in the Astral Umbra and any thought is fulfilled just by thinking it. Some Theurges spend time debating how much the thoughts from the physical realm shape the Astral Umbra and how much the thoughts and ideas within the Astral influence the minds of those in the physical realm.

What is certain is that the Astral Umbra is the least well-known area of the Umbra to the Garou, seconded only by the Deep Umbra. Most Garou have no idea how to enter the Astral Umbra to explore its depths. Umbral scholars have attempted reaching the Astral Umbra through meditation and deep thought with little success. Those who have entered the Astral describe a realm exactly as they expected it to be, yet descriptions differ greatly depending on who is telling the story. The conflicting accounts lead several scholars to believe the Astral Umbra appears as each being sees it in her mind. Of course, this begs the question of if packs entering the Astral Umbra all see the same thing, or if they each experience the realm through a filter of their own expectations and perceptions.

Denizens

Thoughts and concepts are made manifest in the Astral Umbra, the very idea of a thing giving it substance. When a lot of people think about a subject or idea, it has a strong presence in the Astral Umbra. Stronger thoughts can move and act on their own. Within the Astral, gods are just as powerful as mathematical concepts, and both are equally deadly.

Conceptual Spirits

The Astral Umbra is home to every conceivable type of conceptual spirit. The very idea of a thing creates a spirit representation in the Astral Umbra, allowing every thought, dream, or idea to be a spirit somewhere. While these spirits often have counterparts in the Middle Umbra, some are so bizarre they can only be found in the far edges of the Astral. Most spirits in the Astral Umbra are very straightforward, their very nature dependent on the idea, concept, or thought that gave them birth. Spirits of hate, desire, knowledge, conspiracies and many more act as the physical embodiment of those ideas.

Some concepts are much more complex, and their representative spirits exhibit an array of moods and personalities depending on the situation. The spirit of patriotism may welcome and aid a Silver Fang traveler, but be hostile towards a Silent Strider. Many of the spirits are fickle, and though they know their way around the Astral Umbra, they are unlikely to assist a traveler to do anything but leave.

Concepts such as religion and deities create very powerful spirits found within realms created by the collective ideals associated with the religion. A traveler may find God in

Heaven, Nyx among the shadows, or the wise Ahura Mazda upon a throne of goodness and light. These gods may not show any regard for a traveler, but he would be wise to pay them respects regardless of his beliefs in case they decide to take notice.

Mages

After conceptual spirits, the most common thing a Garou is likely to run into is a mage. Mages treat the Astral Umbra as their personal playground. Some even create establishments and strongholds in realms of their own creation. Mages enter the Astral both as mental projections and as physical beings. Few other creatures can control their physical essence as precisely as a mage to accomplish the feat. They have such control over their own will and their surroundings that they are uniquely equipped to deal with the strange conceptual environments of the Astral Umbra.

Interactions with mages in the Umbra tend to be no different from interactions with mages in the physical realm. Some mages may be more interested in talking and helping a Garou in the Umbra, even if they normally wouldn't in the physical realm, and some become hostile for no apparent reason. In all cases, werewolves should be on their guard. Mages within the Umbra are not constrained by the laws of reality and Paradox the way they are in the physical realm.

Nightmares

The Astral Umbra is very closely tied to the Dream Zone and dreams freely pass from one to the other. Dream ideas enter the Astral and return to the Dream Zone within the span of a few moments, never really taking hold in the Astral. Sometimes dreams are in line with thoughts and ideas already in the Astral Umbra and they merge together, strengthening the concept or the conceptual spirit associated with it. Some dream ideas are so common they gain physical representations within the Astral.

Often simple concepts such as falling or flying become spirits of whatever it is they represent. More complex ideas are rarely shared by enough dreamers to take hold and gain form. The only truly complex ideas that ever take shape in the Astral are nightmare dreams. Nightmare ideas are so powerful and impactful for the dreamer that the concept sticks with them, remembered over and over again eliciting strong emotions and eventually gaining form within the Astral. Sometimes the resultant Nightmare is born of a common fear such as spiders, clowns, or zombies. Other times, the Nightmare is a specific yet widely known entity, such as Pennywise the Dancing Clown or Dracula.

Encountering Nightmares in the Astral is dangerous. When a Nightmare encounters a traveler, it invariably attacks her, attempting to prey upon her just as it would in the most dreadful of nightmares. Often, the Nightmare crafts projections of a nightmare-play into the Astral, forcing the

victim to live through a waking dream. These projections are real and capable of touching and affecting the victim. Older and more established Nightmares are particularly nasty to deal with as the dreams they embody are more intense and frightening, but they are subject to the same weaknesses as their subject matter. A Nightmare of Dracula is still vulnerable to a stake through the heart, but only the bravest can summon the courage to wield it.

Vampires

As a Garou travels through the Astral Umbra, he may witness the ghostly forms of vampires floating about tethered to thin silver cords. This is not the physical body of the vampire, it is a thought projection and capable of small amounts of interactions with the Umbra.

Most vampires spend much of their time in the Astral Umbra peering through into the physical realm. Unless the vampire is particularly astute, she tends to ignore her Umbral surroundings. She perceives a thin, watered down version of the Astral Umbra overlaid on top of the physical world. Vampires rarely engage with other entities within the Astral — such as other vampires, Garou, or Mages — as her capabilities in dealing with them are limited by her will and mastery of the Auspex Discipline. A stealthy Garou can pass most vampires without attracting notice, unless of course he attempts to disrupt the silver cord trailing behind one.

The silver cord is the vampire's lifeline back to her body, and she will defend it as best she can versus attack. Vampires are capable of a basic kind of assault, usually attempting to cut the silver cord of other mentally projected travelers. If there is no cord, the vampire has little recourse for an attack. Of course, smart vampires flee at the first sight of a werewolf shining in their muted perceptions.

Travel within the Astral Umbra

The Astral Umbra is closely connected to the Dream Zone, and a traveler may pass into the Astral from any point within. This poses a bit of a problem as the traveler's physical body passes through with him. The Astral is a place of ideas and concepts, not physical realities. On a purely conceptual level, the substance making up a traveler is subject to the same vagaries as any other concept within the Astral. A traveler could very well end up disparate pieces of himself, floating about the Astral with no way to return to his normal state. Even worse is that the Rage of a werewolf irritates the Astral, causing it to warp and become hostile towards the entering Garou. A traveler could pass through the Membrane into the Astral from the Deep Umbra where the two meet at highly conceptual realms. This means the traveler has to delve into some strange and alien realm of the Deep Umbra, pass whatever dangers lie there, to come

to the Astral in a deeply conceptual realm — only to find her physical form drawn into strange ideals.

Some scholars believe that by meditation and thought they can enter the Astral Umbra from any part of the Umbra. This practice has met with limited success. The only place anyone has been able to meditate to enter the Astral is within the Stargazer's Homeland. Through meditation on thoughts and ideas a Stargazer is able to send a mental projection into the Astral, leaving her body behind. This seems to be the safest way to travel, though the werewolf loses any concept of time and body as her mind travels through strange realms, carrying a danger of death through negligence.

Travel within the realm is psycho-reactive, meaning that all a traveler has to do is think of where he wants to go, and he will get there. Traveling between the different realms of the Astral Umbra is as simple as a thought, yet it is not always so easy. Some travelers may find that certain concepts are difficult to wrap their minds around and really concentrate on, making it impossible to reach them. Other areas confuse the mind and prevent a traveler from making her way to new areas. To confuse the issue even further, the Astral Umbra only reacts to true thoughts. If someone is preoccupied with an idea or subconsciously worrying about something, the Astral Umbra will send the traveler to an area that resonates with his worries or preoccupations. When multiple travelers enter the Astral Umbra together, the realms take shape based on the strongest concepts of the group creating a shared experience. Each experiences the same area, with only subtle details filled in by their own imaginations.

Leaving the Astral Umbra poses nearly as many problems as entering. A traveler who entered in her physical form may not be able to leave without assistance, though werewolves are likely to be destroyed by the Umbra before they can decide to leave. Otherwise, a traveler may pay appropriate chiminage to a conceptual spirit to lead her out, which often brings her to the Dream Zone. A traveler who has sent their mind into the Umbra has simply to think of returning to her body to do so. But those thoughts must occur to the traveler, which is often difficult in the face of so many wonders.

Venturing into the Astral Umbra

Sometimes travelers happen into the Astral Umbra by accident, and must figure out how to escape before getting trapped there. Most of the time, travelers seek out the Astral, usually to gain knowledge or seek out some bit of information only found in the depths of the conceptual realm. Below is a list of story ideas that give characters reason to enter the Astral Umbra.

Before Harano

Sword Singer is an Elder Stargazer Galliard who has dedicated her life to crafting Grand Klaives of the utmost beauty and workmanship. She has only created three such klaives in her lifetime. Each one taking several years of working with the silver and the spirit to bind them into something she claims is worth singing songs about. Sword Singer is old and knows she is nearing Harano. She has led a good life full of honor and glory, her own creations used to strike at the heart of the Wyrms. The last of her efforts will go unfinished, barely a lump of raw silver in the vague shape of a dagger. Her intention was to create this last klaive to complete her Rite of the Winter Wolf, but she knows there is no way to finish it before she passes.

Other Garou in Sword Singer's sept offer the use of their klaives for this purpose, but she refuses each one. She is determined to have her klaive, and is willing to go to extremes to find it. She remembers stories that mention anything a visitor can imagine or think of can be found in the Astral Umbra. With all the time she has spent envisioning the final product of her labor, she knows it can be found there, waiting to take shape in the physical world. So, instead of working the metal and teasing out the shape of the blade — a process which takes more time than she has left — she plans to go into the Astral Umbra to retrieve it. She knows the dangers of traveling into the Astral, and does not want to let her body die while her mind searches for her klaive. Sword Singer asks the characters to accompany her on the journey to keep her from losing herself in the Astral so that she may die in the exact way she intends.

Sword Singer is old and set in her ways. She doesn't believe she needs protection in the Astral, just someone to make sure she doesn't get stuck there. She is mostly apathetic to the characters who must make sure they can all leave the Astral with her klaive. Of course, finding the klaive is the easy part. Concepts in the Astral Umbra cannot simply be picked up and carried home. The local conceptual spirits tell the characters that the only way to take the idea out of the Astral is to bind it to something in the physical realm before they leave. They must forge together the concept of the lump of silver waiting at home and the concept of the completed klaive before leaving the Astral so that the two will become one in the physical world.

Lost Theurge

Members of the Lake Mohave Sept, on the Arizona side of the Colorado River, are concerned about one of their Theurges who has gone missing. Dreaming Vision is an Uktena who can forecast the future by watching the shifts in sleeper's dreams. She spends much of her time watching and analyzing dreams, taking many trips to the Dream Zone to

conduct her studies. None of the other soothsayers are able to discern how she does it, but the precision of Dreaming Vision's divinations are uncanny. The other sept members are used to her often week long jaunts into the Umbra, and at first were unconcerned with her absence. It has been over three weeks, and Raven Eyes, The Master of Rite, is concerned that Dreaming Vision will suffer disconnect if she does not return to the physical realm soon. He is concerned that she might have gotten lost in the Umbra, and asks the character to seek her out.

Raven Eyes tells the characters specific dreams Dreaming Vision was studying before she left and suggests they start there. When the characters enter the Dream Zone they find evidence of her passing, but it is clear she is no longer in the realm. As they follow her trail, they discover she has accidentally crossed into the Astral Umbra. They must follow her in if they want to help her find her way out. Dreaming Vision entered the Astral Umbra in her physical form causing the Astral to attack her and attempt to forcefully eject her. The characters find evidence of this assault as they enter, and are also subject to a similar onslaught. They must make their way to Dreaming Vision while fighting off the Astral Umbra, and lead her back out through the Dream Zone before they are torn to pieces.

Astral Assault

The Stargazer Ragabash, Joel, spends a great deal of time contemplating on complex conceptual ideas in the Astral Umbra, often following such ideas to their root causalities. After returning from his last sojourn, he begs anyone who listens to return to the Astral with him to defeat the Wyrms. The other sept members believe Joel is attempting to pull a prank on them to teach them some kind of object lesson about entering the Astral. Not wanting to be remiss in the event Joel has stumbled upon a real issue, the sept Alpha charges the characters with talking to Joel and helping him if it warrants attention.

While Joel was near an abstract realm in the Astral Umbra, a portal opened nearby and six Black Spiral Dancers came through, followed by a mage. The Dancers took no notice of Joel, but instead started off in a direction indicated by the mage, who remained behind. Once the Black Spiral Dancers were out of sight, the mage returned through the portal and closed it behind him. Shocked and curious, Joel followed the Wyrms tainted Garou in secret. Joel could tell the Dancers were in the Astral in their physical bodies, but seemed unaffected by its pull and push, nor did the Astral seem to react to their Rage. Joel followed them long enough to hear their plans before he ran in search of help. The Dancers are looking for the root of the ideas of decay and destruction to bring to Malfeas and feed to the Wyrms. They hope to give him strength beyond imagining with these base concepts.

Joel is uncertain if the Black Spiral Dancers are able to accomplish their goal, or if they will do no more than disrupt the Astral Umbra. He is certain that their success will spell devastation for the Garou. He intends to lead the characters through the Dream Zone into the Astral Umbra to stop the Black Spiral Dancers and return any idea they might have stolen to its proper place in the Astral. Joel tracked down the mage who led the Black Spiral Dancers into the Astral. He says he loaned them tokens that attunes them and suppresses their Rage while in the Astral Umbra, preventing the Astral from destroying them as they search. The characters must find the Black Spiral Dancers and stop them. As a side effect of using the tokens, the Dancers are unable to use their Rage in the Astral, so the characters have an advantage if they can survive long enough to get to the fight.

The Dark Umbra

Just as the Middle Umbra is a spiritual reflection of the world and its inhabitants, the Dark Umbra is a spiritual reflection of the death, suffering, and decay of the world. Home to ghosts, spectres, wraiths, and the destructive forces of entropy, the realm is a dark and bitter place to visit. No one knows the size and extent of the Dark Umbra, though it seems to stretch on forever, containing dead souls and physical representations of humanity's lost civilizations, memories, and darkest fears. Travel within the Dark Umbra can be dangerous for those who are not themselves dead, as the life that flows through them serves as a beacon to the ghosts who dwell within.

Within this Umbra, travelers find ruins of ancient civilizations, the decayed remnants of long lost religions and ideals, and the terrifying creatures that stalk people's nightmares. The shadows of the Dark Umbra are deeper and darker than any found in the material world. Not every aspect of the Dark Umbra is dangerous. While many souls trapped through violent crimes and terrible deaths make up most of the ghostly inhabitants of the Dark Umbra, some ghosts are trapped because they simply want to finish some driving goal. Those will do anything for a chance to complete their life's work and pass on to whatever awaits them on the other side.

The ghosts of the Dark Umbra have their own terminology for their world. The Shadowlands is their term – accepted by other travellers – for the Dark Penumbra, while the roiling fury between the Umbral Realms is better known as the Tempest.

Denizens

Everything in the Dark Umbra is made up of the souls of the dead. Each building, item, and structure is forged from

the souls of ghosts too weak to retain their own consciousness. The strong memories of places and things create representations within the Dark Umbra, but all of these things are created of soulstuff. Whenever a person dies and leaves a ghost, that ghost lives in the Dark Umbra until such a time as it passes on through the destructive force of Oblivion. The ghosts who inhabit the Dark Umbra as entities capable of autonomous movement and thought are the remains of powerful and knowledgeable people.

Spectres

Much like spirits in the Middle Umbra, ghosts have varying strengths and power levels. The Garou know little to nothing about the hierarchy of ghosts, but many have heard the term Spectre. These ghosts are described as powerful Wyrms tainted creatures that attack anything that stumbles into their homes. Few Garou know the true nature of Spectres, but do know enough to try to avoid their notice. Spectres were once normal ghosts who have given themselves over to Oblivion and decay. They now attempt to bring other ghosts to Oblivion, only leaving the Tempest to make attacks on other ghosts in the Shadowlands. If a Spectre is close enough to sense a traveler's life force, it abandons other concerns to seek him out for an easy meal. This makes traversing the Tempest especially dangerous for living Umbral travelers, as even a ghost escort is reluctant to deal with a Spectre.

The Garou have a hard time differentiating Spectres from bane spirits, and some have the misguided belief that the two are the same. This mistake has caused more than a few issues as Garou attempt to deal with Spectres causing problems for humans, only to find they are nowhere to be found in the Middle Umbra. When the Garou can make it into the Dark Umbra to deal with a Spectre, they find that none of their spirit related Gifts affect the ghosts, though claws and teeth seem to work just fine.

Werewolves

Few werewolves fear death, in fact many embrace it as a natural part of life as a defender of Gaia. Yet, they too can be subject to unexpected tragedy and loss which rips them away from life and obligations before they are ready to go. Though most Garou go on to become Ancestor Spirits, a small handful instead become ghosts, doomed to spend the rest of eternity within the Dark Umbra. Those few who become ghosts tend to be strong enough to retain a form and consciousness within the Shadowlands, and are willing to help living Garou who seek them out, though usually that assistance is just to caution the traveler to leave before other hungry ghosts seek out their light energy.

Croatan: The loss of the Croatan tribe was a major blow to the Garou nation. While much of the tribe died with honor and glory in their hearts, many died knowing that they were leaving their land with weakened defenses



against future Wyrms incursions. The sacrifice did serve to send Eater-of-Souls back into the Umbra, though it was not a clean and clear victory. The heavy loss of the tribe scarred both the Wendigo and the Uktena, whose own rage at the loss of their brothers created ripples that touched all of creation.

A few of those who died were not at peace, and could not find peace afterward, sending their souls into the Dark Umbra to brood and seek a resolution to the Garou's weakened state. Those who found themselves within the Dark Umbra banded together to carve out a new home for themselves. Though they are bound to the Umbra and have no ability to affect the material world, they seek out Garou travelers in the Dark Umbra to give warnings or quests, in hopes of strengthening the remaining werewolves, and possibly win a long deserved peace.

White Howlers: When the White Howlers traveled into Malfeas, they hoped for honor and glory in the final destruction of the Wyrms. What they found instead was corruption and darkness. The loss of the tribe and the advent of the Black Spiral Dancers was probably one of the most damaging setbacks to the defenders of Gaia. A legend claims that one member of the tribe, Cororuc, escaped the fate of his fellows and was able to tell their tale before he died. Few know what horrible fate Cororuc truly faced. After his death, he was denied the ability to become an ancestor spirit and his soul was trapped within the Dark Umbra. At first, Cororuc despaired of his fate and withered slowly within the Shadowlands barely staving off Oblivion. The years affording him time to come to terms with the mistakes of his tribe.

It wasn't until a couple of Black Spiral Dancers traveled into the Dark Umbra, seeking to bind Spectres to use in the name of the Wyrms that Cororuc was revitalized. He not only dwelled within the Dark Umbra, his ghost had become a part of it, just as he was once a part of the spiritual and material realms. He tried talking with the pack to convince them to forsake the Wyrms and return to sanity. They scoffed and laughed at his pathetic ghost, then turned on him to kill him. Cororuc defended himself, though he was already dead, out of sheer instinct. When his blows landed, he did not draw blood, but instead their souls poured forth from their bodies like water under pressure. With the soul removed, their bodies died, preventing them from returning to the material world. They became trapped with Cororuc, who then spent his time cleansing them of their Wyrms taint. He had redeemed a small few of his previous tribe mates, and forged a new purpose. He would do what he could to either redeem the rest, or kill them in the process.

Now the tiny pack of White Howlers within the Dark Umbra prowls its depths, seeking Black Spiral Dancer descendants who may happen into their realm. Mostly, they destroy the ghosts of Black Spiral Dancer Kinfolk who cannot be redeemed, and seek to destroy any Black Spiral Dancers who happen into the Dark Umbra. Cororuc's pack

avoids interacting with the few other Garou ghosts in the Dark Umbra, preferring to work alone. As with most other ghosts, they are drawn to the light of the living and will gladly attack any stray Garou who enters the Dark Umbra, as their only true concern for redemption are other Black Spiral Dancers.

Travel within the Dark Umbra

Few Umbral travelers really know how to enter the Dark Umbra. The Silent Striders have a rite to enter, which they have shared with the other tribes, but other than the single rite, the Dark Umbra seems an impenetrable fortress. For this reason, few Garou feel the trip is not worth taking, unless absolutely necessary. Some travelers have convinced particularly powerful Banes or spirits of Death to open ways in the Dark Umbra. While this affords them a way into the Shadowlands, these spirits have little to no information about the Dark Umbra as they refuse to travel there themselves. This leaves the travelers with no reliable way out. A few Umbral travelers have found themselves drawn into Dark Umbra after getting trapped in the Gauntlet while attempting to shift sideways into the Middle Umbra. The life force attracted ghosts who then pulled them into the Dark Umbra. Little is known about the fate of these travelers, as none have ever returned from the harrowing trip. An even more dangerous route into the Dark Umbra lies within the depths of the Abyss. Making it through the Abyss is a feat within itself, and once the traveler is in the Dark Umbra, he can't return the way he came.

Traveling within the Dark Umbra is surprisingly similar to travel within the Middle Umbra. The Shadowlands are mapped very closely to the physical world, though lost and destroyed structures with strong emotional resonances still remain within the Dark Umbra cluttering the landscape with their shadowy forms. Everything within the Dark Umbra is surrounded by the Tempest, a raging torrent of storms and chaos. The Tempest separates the Shadowlands from the rest of the Dark Umbra, and within its stormy depths lie small islands of calm containing cities of the dead and other lost places. Traversing the Tempest requires the use of Byways — roads built by ghosts long ago that lead between the islands within the Tempest. Living travelers attempting to use the byways risk running into hostile ghosts, or getting lost within the Tempest with no way to escape, eventually drawn down into Oblivion.

Ghosts living in the Dark Umbra do not accept trespassers into their domains. Even the smallest and most pathetic looking ghosts attack those who linger too long within the realm, attracted to their shining life force. Some ghosts, actively seek out travelers to give them quests or tasks to complete in the material world. They grant their charges

with special tokens of favor, showing other ghosts that they are spoken for. Some ghosts respect the tokens and leave the travelers alone, while others see those who hold them as dangerous interlopers who must be destroyed. Some more insidious ghosts view the token as a sign of gullibility and attempt to trick the holder into performing their own tasks.

The Silent Striders view these tasks as a sacred duty, and encourage young tribe members to accept and complete them as rites of passage. The Silent Striders visit the Dark Umbra with more frequency than any other Garou tribe. They seek the wisdom and knowledge of the souls trapped there, hoping to gain insights that will help them in their fight to save Gaia. Though the tribe spends quite a bit of time traversing the Dark Umbra, they are not immune to the dangers that come with entering the realm. They are, however, more familiar with which areas to avoid, and which hold the unrestful souls of creatures wishing to press them into service.

Venturing into the Dark Umbra

Despite the many dangers that come with entering a realm born of death, certain situations require the Garou to travel there in search of answers. Below is a list of story ideas that give characters reasons to enter the Dark Umbra.

Stemming the Tide

The Sept of the Bright Skies protects a caern that is closely connected to both the Middle and Dark Umbrae, such that spirits and ghosts can freely pass between the physical realm and the Dark Umbra at the caern's heart. The Garou here are charged with monitoring whatever comes out of the Umbrae, preventing unruly spirits and ghosts from stealing life force from the local community, or possessing their Kinfolk. The sept is old, and scant few Garou remain to monitor the area properly. Recently, a tide of ghostly shapes poured out of the caern heart to attack the Garou. The few survivors of the attack have put out a call for help to any that will listen.

The characters respond to the call and find that all of the sept has been killed and the ghosts have escaped into the town, possessing people and causing havoc. As they round up the ghosts to return them to the Dark Umbra, the characters recognize some of the ghosts as people they have killed in the past. When the characters get close to the caern heart and the entrance to the Dark Umbra, they find the area teeming with ghosts, all who seem to have deep aggressions towards werewolves. Investigation reveals that all of the ghosts were once victims of Garou killings. The ghosts are congregating, but dealing with the rest involves going into the Dark Umbra. Once they get there, the characters discover that a single powerful ghost is calling other ghosts

to this location to direct them into the physical realm to attack werewolves. The characters must disperse the ghosts congregating at the caern heart, but to do so they must first seek out and destroy the ghost directing their movements.

Ancestral Rescue

Garou across the world have been reporting that they are losing connection to a few of their ancestor spirits. They do not respond when called upon, and they cannot be found within the tribal homelands. Those who have lost connection have searched high and low within the Umbra, but cannot find a trace of where they have gone. Some believe the Silent Striders may have ideas, but only one has come forward to assist, Ethan "Soul's Fury". Soul's Fury has devoted his life to finding and restoring the Silent Strider's homeland, as well as recovering his own ancestral spirits. While to this date his quest has been unsuccessful, he has learned quite a bit about the Umbra and its seldom-traveled areas. Based on recent spirit movements near the Abyss, Soul's Fury believes the answer to what is happening to the ancestor spirits can be found in the Dark Umbra.

The characters' sept has lost contact with several of their ancestor spirits. Maybe even one of the pack members has been disconnected personally. The Sept has requested Soul's Fury's assistance in solving the mystery. The characters must go with him into the Dark Umbra to search for clues of the ancestor spirits. Within, they find that many of the ancestor spirits are trapped by a powerful Spectre. The ancestor spirits were cast into the Abyss by Wyrms and were captured by the Spectre, who is now slowly feeding off their life forces. A few other ancestor spirits who were also cast into the Dark Umbra attempted to free them, but any time they get close, the Spectre captures another of their number. The characters must free the ancestor spirits and lead them back to the Middle Umbra.

Spectral Binding

Before the Western Garou came to the United States, the Uktena worked to clear all the Wyrms taint from their lands. In the case of banes too powerful to destroy, they instead bound them deep within the earth. The Uktena fashioned ritual bindings made to last, and in most cases the banes are still bound and ineffective. At the time, the Uktena knew nothing of the Dark Umbra, and nothing about ghosts or Spectres. Dealing with Spectres was particularly difficult and a special ritual was developed to bind them as well.

One such Spectre is bound just outside of a Pennsylvania sept. The sept changed hands long ago from the Uktena to the Get of Fenris, and no one knows or remembers the binding. The Garou in the area are experiencing problems with what seem like terrible banes swarming the location, yet when they travel to the Umbra, they cannot find the spirits. Evidence of ghost attacks and possessions on the

human community makes it clear that the sept is dealing with an onslaught of powerful ghosts. The sept Alpha requests the characters to investigate what is causing the ghosts to act out and how to stop them. The characters must enter the Dark Umbra to follow the ghosts, and discover the presence of the Spectre bound in strange spiritual ties. The bindings are weak from the ghosts tearing away at the magic holding them. As the characters destroy the ghosts, more keep arriving. Something is sending the ghosts to the Spectre, and the only way to deal with it is to follow them to their source. What awaits is another powerful Spectre, attempting to free its ally.

The Quest

An Elder Theurge Silent Strider, Chris “Son of Earth”, is seeking a way to find descendants of his tribe’s Kinfolk. He hopes to establish a new base of Kinfolk from whatever scattered few he can find around the world outside of his original homeland. To do so, he is working on creating a fetish designed to hone in on the living relations of someone who is already dead. Son of Earth has spent years designing the housing and physical shape of the fetish, fashioning it out of the thigh bone of his great-grandfather. Now, he seeks to imbue the fetish with a Death spirit appropriate for the task. Before he can do that, he needs one more item to tie the fetish to the spiritual realm: a piece of the Umbra that is most familiar to the spirit he wishes to coax into his fetish.

Son of Earth has asked the characters to travel into the Dark Umbra with him to both retrieve the piece he is looking for. He tells the characters that the most appropriate item would be to take a trinket from what he calls the First Grave. He explains that the Dark Umbra reflects all the fears and dread about death, as well as human made monuments to the death of loved ones. Deep within the Tempest lies an island with the First Grave – the shadowed representation of the first ever marker humans placed to remember a buried loved one. Upon the First Grave are trinkets of remembrance from every single other grave ever dug and marked by humans. To prime the fetish to be specific for Silent Strider Kinfolk, he needs a trinket or possession of the line’s ancestors, but he can’t find such an item in the physical realm. Instead, Son of Earth hopes to find a Relic of one of his ancestor Kinfolk at the First Grave. Travel within the Tempest is dangerous, as ghosts often travel the Byways and will gladly steal the life force of any living creature who invades their home. The characters must escort Son of Earth into the Dark Umbra and defend him while he searches for his Relic.

The Deep Umbra

The Umbra at the furthest reaches from earth is considered the Deep Umbra. Here the laws of reality have very little sway over the world and its inhabitants. The Deep

Umbra lies beyond the known realms of the Astral, Near, and Deep Umbrae, on the other side of the nearly impenetrable Membrane. If the Near Umbra is considered a shell encasing the Earth, the Astral Umbra above and the Dark Umbra below, then the Deep Umbra is the unknown wilds beyond the shell, stretching far away to the infinity beyond imagination.

Within the Deep Umbra, forces of creation and destruction – and the chaos and order warring in between – mold and shape the landscape. Realms seem to ebb and flow, only taking shape as the need arises, losing consistency and changing in no discernable pattern. What would be considered realms in the Near Umbra are no more than temporary structures created by chance, or when and where a traveler’s need arises.

The passage of time similarly suffers from constant creation and destruction, causing strange dilation, stretching, and sometimes backward flow at random. It seems that, as with all other things in the Deep Umbra, time is a function of relative need, and does not follow normal or realistic constraints.

Garou packs who monitor Anchorheads know that the Deep Umbra is an ever changing thing. They report strange spirits lurking just on the other side of the Membrane, somehow unable to pass through. Those who have stepped across the Membrane describe a different surrounding each time they enter from the same Anchorhead, as though they never actually make it to the same place in the Deep Umbra twice when they enter.

Most Garou never enter the Deep Umbra, and those who do are ill-equipped to navigate through its ever changing realms and the ancient horrors that dwell within. It feels hostile and alien to them, and many cannot bear the thought of staying for too long. Many who enter become lost within, never to be seen from again. Those who go looking cannot track them, and have limited success in retrieving their lost brethren. Yet all searchers seem to return intact. Garou, with a strict purpose in mind, and a goal in sight have lead their packs in and back out again. They return with stories of epic journeys, and near death experiences as they dealt with the hostile environment. Generally, the Deep Umbra is the purview of mages and some Fera – especially the Nuwisha – who are much more capable of dealing with and exerting their will over the primordial elements swirling within it.

Disconnection

The Deep Umbra has many unique qualities not found in any other part of the Umbra. It is the furthest from the physical realm in terms of laws of reality, and possibly even locational distance within the Umbra. It is also the most real of all areas of the Umbra. The Celestines who are responsible for all of creation and those things within it live in the

Deep Umbra. The very real sun, stars, planets, and moon physically manifest in the Umbra, along with the physical bodies of the Triat. In some ways, the Deep Umbra is just as physical as the physical realm.

Travelers within the Deep Umbra can sense the connection to the physical, and it is different than any other place in the whole of the Umbra. Part of that feeling comes from the strange things that happen to time there. A traveler may experience only a moment or a day or two of time for every week or year they remain in the Deep Umbra. Maybe it is the primordial nature of the Deep Umbra, maybe the connection between the Celestines and Gaia is so pronounced that her children are relieved of all burdens while there, or maybe it is a simple function of the time dilation. Whatever the reason, Garou who enter the Deep Umbra stop counting time for disconnection, either from the spiritual or physical realm. It is as though they exist in both at once.

Denizens

Not everything a wandering Garou might encounter in the Deep Umbra is a spirit, and even the spirits may seem alien and horrific to them. The Celestines and some of their oldest creations reside within the realm. The Deep Umbra houses a wide array of creatures beyond spirits, including other Garou and Fera, primordial creations, and even mages.

Celestines

Each of the planets, the moon and the sun are all manifestations of the Celestine spirits. Some Celestines have celestial bodies – stars, planets, asteroids, comets – that fill the sky above Earth. Spirits of each abound in the Umbra, and some even have realms within the Near Umbra that reflect their heavenly body and house most of their spirits. Others can only be found in the Deep Umbra, their influence reaching only so far into the realm around them, their Incarnae dwelling nearby. Many of the Celestines and Incarnae are relatively benign. They only react when provoked and are not aggressive otherwise. Some are territorial, but do not seek out conflict.

Entering the Deep Umbra through Anchorheads near Luna's domain in the Aetherial Realm leads to beautiful moonlit expanses populated by powerful Lune Incarnae. How the Lunes react to travelers depends on the phase of the moon. If Luna is full, they tend to be hospitable to a degree, playfully interacting with travelers as the full light of Luna infuses them. As Luna wanes the Lunes become more anxious and sinister, willfully tricking travelers, or growing hostile at the slightest perceived insult to their mistress.

The area of the Deep Umbra that houses Helios is nothing but heat and brilliant white light. Bridges made up of reddish light similar to solar flares lead across deep chasms filled with super-heated atomized elements. Fire elemental Incarnae dwell here, bright and cheerful, yet charged to defend the realm against intruders. They will attack any

werewolves who enter the realm, though they welcome the Corax and others who worship Helios. Any surface within Helios's realm is too hot to stand or remain near for too long. Only flying spirits enter this area of the Deep Umbra, and travelers without the ability to fly burn up in the fire before they have a chance to realize their mistake.

The scant few Celestines that can only be found the Deep Umbra are truly alien to Garou. They have no equivalent in the physical realm, and their influence does not spread to other parts of the Umbra. These Celestines view the Deep Umbra in its entirety as their home, and indeed much of the more horrific sights are due to the influence of these Celestines. They do not like intruders, and actively seek out any who would dare trespass into their homes. Each has only a few Incarnae, more powerful than even those of other Celestines found within the Deep Umbra.

Triat

Each of the Weaver, Wyld, and Wyrms dwell within the Deep Umbra. Here the Wyld surrounds himself with the forces of creation and chaos, the Weaver resides in the center of the Pattern Web which radiates away from her, and the Wyrms lie trapped in his prison of webs. Each of these powerful beings shape the Umbra around them, their influence creating beautiful or horrific landscapes unaffected by the ever changing nature of the Umbra. The influence is so strong that it bleeds into other parts of the Umbra, creating realms within the Near Umbra closely tied to the area of the Deep Umbra in which they reside.

Anchorheads within the Aetherial realm are not the only way to enter the Deep Umbra. Passing through the Membrane from the realms associated with any of the Triat leads travelers dangerously close to the ancient spirits. Ancient Incarnae – more powerful than any found within the Near Umbra – reside near their patrons, acting as terrible avatars. These Incarnae are hostile to invaders, violently protecting their homes and spiritual patrons.

Entering the Deep Umbra through the Flux Realm leads travelers into a maelstrom of chaotic forces. Incarnae of the Wyld react with hostility and violence towards any entering his realm. They are fiercely protective of their patron spirit, and even those travelers dedicated to the protection of the Wyld cannot stand in the face of the primordial chaos the Incarnae call forth to banish intruders.

Following the Pattern Web through the CyberRealm leads travelers into the Deep Umbra. Weaver Incarnae travel the web, changing lines and constantly reordering paths. The spirits are not fond of visitors, but are not openly hostile when encountered. Instead, they choose to lead travelers astray, weaving the Pattern Web into an impenetrable fortress trapping an unwary traveler within the web for all eternity.

The only way to reach the area of the Deep Umbra that houses the Wyrms is by following the black spiral through

the center of Malfeas. The bottom of the pit touches near to the Wyrms' lair in the Deep Umbra, and the strongest and most corrupt of the Wyrms' Incarnae — avatars of the Triatic Wyrms — prowl the lower depths of the spiral, looking to corrupt any that come close. Those who willingly make the trip, the Black Spiral Dancers, are touched by the Incarnae, souls twisted and corrupted with the taint of the Wyrms. Those who survive return fully dedicated to the Wyrms, forever connected to the Incarnae that corrupted them.

Bunyip

Some Garou have retreated into the Umbra, only to be trapped within the Deep Umbra for the rest of their lives. Others have purposefully retreated far into the Deep Umbra, creating a space to live in relative peace. After the few remaining Bunyip retreated into the Umbra after the War of Shame, they made vows to return one day. They were never able to regain strength enough to return, and instead lost their connection to the material world and sat adrift in the Umbra as they slowly died away. After losing their connection to the physical world, they began to wander the Umbra, lost and out of balance. They were drawn to the Deep Umbra and the soft healing light of Luna.

The remaining members of the tribe journeyed far into the Deep Umbra, passing from place to place with little to no notice of the horrors and wonders they passed. Finally, they settled into a small section that reminded them of their home. The longer they remained, the stronger their connection to Gaia became, and eventually they became able to travel back to the material world — in a fashion. When they finally did, it was not as a physical creature, instead they could only project a faint ghostly image into the world. They had become creatures of the Umbra, spirits in a way, and the most they could do was haunt and frighten the Garou usurpers within Australia. The Bunyip remain within the Deep Umbra still, trapped within the timeless space, discontented and ashamed of their loss. To this day, they attempt to travel back to the material world and regain a physical form, yet the only evidence of such as they terrorize the local Garou are their shadowy spirits.

The Fera

The wereravens claim to travel every part of the Umbra, gathering secrets and information as they go. Rumors say the Corax homeland is connected to the Deep Umbra via Anchorheads, allowing them to travel through the Deep Umbra as a conduit to get to other parts of the Umbra. Some Corax say they have mapped out every single Anchorhead in existence. Regardless of the veracity of the claims, the Corax travel through the Deep Umbra with frequency. Garou travelers may happen across a Corax flying through the Deep Umbra, making her way to some unknown destination. That isn't to say that the wereravens have some

kind of preternatural sense that allows them to navigate the Deep Umbra any better than werewolves. The Corax use tried and true paths, rarely straying from a known line from one point to another in fear of getting lost in the vast depths of the realm. Wereravens are likely to take interest in other travelers and stop to chat and exchange information. A Corax will gladly lead a traveler through the Deep Umbra, but only on the route she is currently taking — changing routes once started is dangerous, and quick way to get lost.

Members of the Umbral Danse travel through all of the Umbra as their brethren travel the physical world. The Nuwisha claim their homeland boasts doors into every part of the Umbra. The doors open and close at seeming random, as Coyote enjoys playing with his children. Sometimes doors open into the Deep Umbra, and the Nuwisha gladly pass through when the opportunity arises. Usually, the only reason the werecoyotes leave their Umbral homeland is because they must fulfill their duty in teaching hard lessons. Not all of those lessons need be taught on Earth. The Nuwisha see opportunity for lessons in the Umbra just as much as the physical world, especially when a traveler is so stupid as to travel to the worlds beyond that lie outside of his comfort zone. Encountering a Nuwisha in the Deep Umbra most often leads to a hard lesson learned, and sometimes it leads to the traveler getting lost and beaten before finding his way home. Travelers should be wary of meeting the tricksters, though recognizing them on sight within the Deep Umbra isn't exactly easy.

Travel within the Deep Umbra

The Membrane serves as an impenetrable wall, and for good reason. What lies beyond is a realm of horrors. For those that know where and how to pass the Membrane, entering the Deep Umbra is deceptively easy. Yet, navigating and understanding what hides within is not. The Deep Umbra is a home to a host of different areas, realms and landscapes. A traveler into the Deep Umbra may find himself walking amongst a vast expanse of star strewn land, delving into the deepest pits of black abyss, or floating amongst alien flora and fauna. No trods or paths wind through the land, and moonlit arits seem to appear and disappear as readily as anything else in the realm. Even a Garou's internal senses are disrupted, preventing her from fully trusting her own instincts on how to navigate through this part of the Umbra.

The Deep Umbra is a conglomeration of many realms, residences, and spaces, and unlike the Near Umbra's neat separation of realms, each flows into the other expressing elements in strange, beautiful, and often horrifying combinations. Those who have entered the Deep Umbra and returned to tell tales cannot define boundaries from their journey. Landscapes may have changed, yet the path and destination remained constant.



Some Theurges speculate that the Deep Umbra is whatever is required of it at the time, its realms being created as the need arises, and dissipating once used. Some travelers within the Deep Umbra might never experience more than one aspect of the ever changing landscape while visiting, when others might journey through the turmoil and chaos to eventually reach their destinations.

Not everything changes in the Deep Umbra. Spirits of vast power and influence inhabit the realm, and where those Celestines reside, their influence bends the Umbra into a shape that is an immutable reflection of the resident spirit. Travelers may walk through alien realms and constructs at random only to find themselves in lands with defined structure and order. Some of the areas may seem familiar, moonlit vistas, sun drenched beaches, deep lush forests, and even thick spider web covered lands. Many other areas are completely alien with cracked mirrored lands molded into shapes that require five or more dimensions to describe, or vast abysses filled with living shadows making up the entire realm.

When a traveler comes too close to one of these areas, he becomes anchored to it, his path taking him further into the realm. Sometimes this is a good thing for the traveler, as he may find an Anchorhead in the realm or a passage into one of the Near Realms associated with the Celestine. He

may also become lost within the recesses of a realm with no connection to the rest of the Umbra. If he notices in time, the traveler may attempt to turn around and walk out the way he came. While he may not reach the same path he started on, the edges of the realms are defined enough that he could retrace his way to it. The laws of reality do not apply the same in the Deep Umbra, and this tactic might not work if he has ventured too far into the area. Sometimes the best way is to just keep going, with hopes to come out on some other side of the realm. Some of the spirits in these realms will escort an intruder out, or even happily bring the traveler to a nearby exit from the Deep Umbra. Many more are likely to grow hostile at the intrusion, attacking the traveler for his mistake.

Venturing into the Deep Umbra

Garou have traveled into the Deep Umbra for little reason more than desire of exploration and seeking the unknown. Most often, a spirit has asked them for aid in some matter or another than requires the werewolves to pass through an Anchorhead into the depths of the realm. Below is a list of story ideas that give characters reasons to enter the Deep Umbra.

The Abandoned Post

Ever since the decision in 2006 to no longer classify Pluto as a true planet, the Celestine has been in decline. While the dwarf planet still gains the admiration and discussion of the world, the loss of true planet status has drained its ego and energy. This decline has radiated out into all his spirits, causing them to act erratically. Meros is the most affected, being so closely connected to the Celestine. When Meros left his realm in the Aetherial, many supposed the wanderer was on one of his many sojourns. But, after eight years of absence many spirits suspect he isn't coming back. Spirits of the Wyld have moved into Meros's realm, causing mischief and chaos — and they are encroaching on the nearby realm of Shantar, Incarna of Neptune.

Spirits all across the Aetherial Realm are in an uproar about Meros's apparent abandonment of his duties. It is all they can talk about, and some are refusing to help or do anything themselves from the perceived slight. The most affected by this abandonment is Shantar, who is now dealing with Wyld spirits causing trouble in her domain. Shantar needs help, but what she really needs is for Meros to return. She has sent her spirit minions all across the Umbra looking for anyone who will lend her aid. The characters have come to her in response to this request. She believes Meros retreated into the Deep Umbra, walking its expansive reaches and has yet to return. The character must travel into the Deep Umbra to find Meros, explain the situation in his realm and neighboring ones, and convince him to return to his post.

The New Celestine

Sightings of a new celestial body in the night sky's Pen-umbral reflection have the Garou Nation in an uproar. Some spirits report it as a planet, as large as Earth, just past Plutos' orbit. None of the spirits have actually traveled close enough to see the celestial body up close, so many Garou question the veracity of their claims. It does not have an equivalent in the physical realm, leading some to think that it is just a rather large comet or some other spirit traveling the sky. Yet, it has been in the same position for over a month, which is far too long for even the slowest moving traveler to linger.

Curiosity and a bit of fear have gripped the Garou, and various sept Alphas have sent out a call for a select few individuals to delve into the Umbra and travel to the object to investigate. The characters have responded to this call. As the characters travel through the Near Umbra towards the Aetherial Realm and towards the thing, it grows bigger

in their vision, until eventually it looks to be the same size as the moon. At the far reaches of the Aetherial, the characters can tell that the thing they are seeing is beyond the Membrane, maybe just on the other side. The characters must delve into the Deep Umbra to find the source of the object. In the Deep Umbra, the characters find Ignamia, a Celestine who is being attacked by powerful minions of the Wyrms. She is forced to retreat from her realm, and is pushing dangerously close to the Near Umbra. She needs assistance, but has never really interacted with the other Celestines, as most of the ones near her are in Slumber. The characters must figure out a way to stop the Wyrms spirits and prevent the Celestine from erupting into the Near Umbra.

Trial and Error

A Child of Gaia Ragabash, "Truth Seeker," challenged for the Rank of Athro. The formidable Adren has been through much in his life, and many within his sept felt the Rank challenge was long overdue. Teliah is the most respected Athro in Truth Seeker's sept, and though she is a Theurge, he chose to challenge her. Teliah is well-known for sending her challengers into the Umbra, and Truth Seeker was looking forward to the challenge for some time. Teliah tasked Truth Seeker with solving a puzzle. She handed him a carved box and told him that once he could open the thing, she would view him as Athro. The only hint that Teliah gave to Truth Seeker was that the answer could not be found in the physical realm, and that he would need to travel deep into the Umbra to discover its secrets. Truth Seeker entered the Umbra on his task with determination and excitement.

That was four months ago. No one has seen nor heard from Truth Seeker since news came from Garou guarding an Anchorhead in a nearby part of the Aetherial Realm that he had passed through the Membrane there. No news of his return followed, and the sept has sent inquiries to the other guarded Anchorheads wondering if he came out from a different direction. Truth Seeker is thought to be lost somewhere in the Deep Umbra. His sept requests the characters to find Truth Seeker and help him return home. The characters must travel into the Deep Umbra and find Truth Seeker, and return him home if possible. When the characters begin following the other werewolf's trail in the Deep Umbra, they find that his deep contemplation on the puzzle box lead him to the realm the box originated from, and somehow into the box itself. Truth Seeker is frozen in time within the box, and the characters are his only hope for getting out of the box and returning safely to his home sept.



Chapter Four: Spirits

The Umbra is shaped like the physical world, a warped shadow cast by ephemeral light. As the Umbra reflects the world, its denizens populate that reflection. To say that spirits represent creatures, objects, and even concepts in the physical world is like saying that the address on a mailbox represents the family living in the home. Spirits are not ‘alive’ in the traditional sense. They exist as pure Essence with will and thought given shape by their Earthly counterparts, whether physical or conceptual.

Every spirit is an aspect of the greater whole that is Gaia. Understanding each of these mysterious entities, from the warring Triat to a Gaffling born of a specific oak tree, is part of understanding Gaia and the nature of reality itself. Trips to the Umbra, as well as the right Gifts and rites, reveal a spiritual side to everything that can be found under – and including – the sun. Each creature and concept the Garou experience has a will of its own or a spiritual patron and protector, coloring every part of a werewolf’s existence. Hunting a prey animal for food is an act with meaning when a werewolf knows that respecting the animal’s spirit and nature impacts the world around her. She views the nature of war or conflict differently after first meeting the entities embodying them as concepts.

The Basic Nature of Spirits

Much like how the Penumbra is the shadow cast by the life of the physical world, spirits are shadows and reflections of aspects of physical reality. As things grow more important on Earth, Essence takes on its shape and grows as well. Some spirits echo specific locations and concepts like ‘the Monongahela River’ or ‘nightmares of animal attacks.’ Others, particularly stronger ones, represent broad archetypes – not merely the spirit of a rat nor even a type of rat but the Rat Incarna itself.

‘Important,’ in this case, does not necessarily mean ‘important to humans.’ The separation of the spiritual and physical worlds over millions of years and untold ages has made it less obvious, but spirits as a whole simply *are* and always have been. Spirits are a facet of reality itself and have been for as long as reality has had facets. Whether contained within the physical essence of the oldest rocks and trees or just on the other side of the Gauntlet, everything shares a link with a spiritual aspect in the Umbra.

CHICKEN-SPIRIT OR EGG-SPIRIT

Speaker-for-the-Ancients, Children of Gaia Theurge of the Hays Woods Sept, answers this one for what feels like the hundredth time:

Nobody knows for sure if spirits look the way they do because of human myth and imagery or the other way around. You get spirits of peace that look like doves and lust Banes that look like succubi. Now, sometimes we get clear evidence of a spirit form appearing after humans produce the association. City Fathers and Mothers in particular imprint on the people of the city. You get war-spirits dressed in uniform and we're pretty sure the Army ain't looking into the Umbra for designs.

I hope not, anyhow. That's more than I want to wrap my head around.

But look, I've been researching and studying spirits and spirit history and stuff like that since before my First Change. My pack specializes in the weirder spirit stuff. And even then, even though we can be sure that most spirits are shaped at least a little bit by human belief, we've got no way of declaring as an absolute fact that 'Zeus' or 'Poseidon' and such aren't based on some enlightened oracle getting a look at a storm or ocean spirit in a humanoid form.

As tangible things and creatures shape essence into spiritual form, powerful concepts also imprint upon reality and form spirits. The emotions, will, and belief of living things forge personifications of abstract concepts like war or greed. While most common in the Astral Umbra, these concepts and emotions are also the source of many Epiphlings. Other conceptual spirits come into being in the depths of the Umbra and travel to places where they can feed and grow stronger.

The bond between a spirit and the thing it represents often works both ways. A healthy forest has a powerful Jagglings that can grow over time as the forest thrives. If the spirit is somehow directly tainted, however, the forest sickens. Not only does disease ravage the trees but the animals grow weak and corruption and weakness overtake any spirits serving under the forest spirit. The forest slowly dies as the corruption twists the spirit.

A spirit of anger feeds on the agitation and rage of nearby beings depending on circumstances. Conflict and

pointless frustration attract and fuel it. If it doesn't grow strong enough to influence things, a peaceful resolution could starve it.

Spirits typically manifest as idealized and often exaggerated versions of their anchors. If the anchor is a specific tree or rock, they resemble it. If the anchor is something broader, like a collection of creatures, the spirit takes on some archetypal representative form. They also behave in a manner consistent with the concept they represent. A lion-spirit, left to its own devices, hunts and chases gazelle-spirits. The gazelle-spirit, left to its own devices, is most comfortable being hunted and chased.

Spirits of ephemeral concepts, riddles, and abstractions take on a broad variety of forms. Epiphlings in particular manifest in a variety of ways but each distinctly represents the concept they embody. Different spirits of dread or fear appear in an array of nightmarish archetypes even if they're very much the same beneath the surface. One spirit of desire takes the shape of a classical representation of Aphrodite and another looks like a film noir femme fatale. Attentive Garou should easily identify an Epiphling's nature based on their appearance.

Sometimes a spirit is defined by function and purpose as well as its nature. A spirit embodies a core concept but its superiors give it particularly suitable tasks that fall under its purview in some way. Such tasks give it the opportunity to develop itself and grow in strength as it serves the Incarna above it. A water elemental living in a river receives instructions to carry objects over the edge of a waterfall. The spirit's successes empower it and make the rapids that much deadlier until the rapids-Gagging becomes a waterfall-Jagglings. It guards ever-expanding stretches of river, drowning and smashing the river's enemies. Becoming the patron of the entire river seems only natural when the time comes.

Elsewhere, a spirit of organization resembling an ephemeral filing clerk coordinates the Weaver's servants in an office building. Proper service leads to promotions and responsibilities encompassing more of the city. Over time it expands its repertoire of abilities as it progresses from Gagging to Jagglings. Its appearance develops arachnid cues that become more prominent as its masters reconfigure it for new duties. It eventually crouches on the office building roof like a spider constructed of radio antennae, broadcasting orders to the entire district.

This is not simply how the spirit appears, but how it is. Regardless of what they represent, anything that defines their shape or behavior or appearance also defines their very nature and vice-versa. When an entity's existence revolves around representing a Platonic ideal, its appearance and reality are one. An entity such as the spirit's Jagglings or Incarna master can reshape its form and nature. A Theurge with the Malleable Spirit Gift (W20, p. 166) or perhaps a powerful mage can do the same.



Awakening

The Umbra would be a very busy place if every object showed itself through the Gauntlet, but even those that don't still contain a dormant spiritual reflection. Simply putting time and energy and care into something can stir its spirit and over time awaken and strengthen its spiritual partner. All manner of human rituals, whether deliberate cultural occultism or mundane actions easily mistaken for worship, can bring a spirit out of its dormant state bit by bit.

Garou have more consistent ways of awakening spirits with methods like the Rite of Spirit Awakening (W20, p. 212) or other rituals designed to appeal to specific entities. Garou and Fera rites make spirits coherent enough for proper interaction, due to untold ages of experimentation and the presence of ancient spirit pacts. A Theurge can perform the Rite of Spirit Awakening on a circuit breaker and ask the electricity elemental within to interfere on her pack's behalf. Another awakens a poisoned lake to make it easier to access and cleanse the toxic waste's spiritual payload.

Awakening a spirit requires more than just thinking about it very hard, doing some chanting, and pumping energy into the ether. The mystic uses a ritual of some sort to align herself with the spirits and communicate with them on her own level. The ability to communicate with spirits has never been common among humanity but just

enough humans have gotten it right to lay down a lot of groundwork on understanding the animistic universe in which they live. Every culture produces enough enlightened people to see past the mundane shell of the world and witness the forces working within everyday things.

A very rare few have even found ways to access the Umbra and petition spirits directly. These mystics, be they priests or shamans or oracles, have brought enough of the true nature of reality back to their peoples to give humanity glimpses of the world that werewolves fight to protect. Just as many have gotten it just wrong enough to make things worse for the Garou, though.

People who misinterpret spirits as manifestation of biblical angels or forge Faustian deals with dangerous entities cause as much grief to their fellow man as they do the Garou. A consistent ritual passed down by spirit-aware humans is likely to fall into the hands of someone willing to exploit it for personal gain. Cults form around those who can actually call up spiritual manifestations. Gaia's people are wary of such cults, as even a well-meaning spirit can be changed for the worse by the beliefs of the group feeding it.

Most of the time when humans awaken a spirit it happens through personal ritual and effort misinterpreted as prayer or worship. Even an oblivious human can address the spirit within a musical instrument in its own metaphorical language by painstakingly caring for and tuning it. If the

FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE

From Diana “Unpronounceable” Gallacci’s ‘Spirit Sensitivity’ lecture for new cubs:

While the elementals in the Lawson Adit tunnels were more familiar with technology than some from the mine’s usage for educational purposes, the pack of young Glass Walkers misunderstood how much. When they realized the deeper spirits were out of touch with the modern world, they should have contacted someone more experienced at the sept for guidance.

Instead, they lost their tempers trying to explain the concept of ‘smartphones’ to it when they just needed to find out how many intruders got there first. And when an earth elemental is so offended that a more experienced Theurge has to smooth things over just to get anything out of them, it’s a waste of time and energy that they could have spent on far better things.

Which brings me to a related lesson. While it is normally a good idea to be polite and respectful with spirits of the earth, it’s even more important when you’re in a neglected mine that crosses an active fault line.”

instrument sounds better when it’s been cleaned and worn parts replaced, he might never know that he’s experiencing a blessing from the air elemental that calls it home.

Communication

A Theurge’s training and experiences quickly teach her how to tell the difference between coincidence, blessing, or unusual communication. What might pass for a friendly chat with a pain-spirit is substantially different from the Naturae in a medicinal-herb garden. Speaking with a spirit requires a great deal of understanding, given that many spirits aren’t complex enough for casual speech.

Complex spirits can be powerful enough that making them communicate in an uncomfortable fashion is seen as disrespectful. Patience and simplified explanation are fine for dealing with the Gaffling of a child’s toy. However, a certain computer Jaggling insists on nothing but logical, unambiguous sentences incorporating programming language jargon. The Jaggling is likely to outright refuse to deal with a Garou that doesn’t cater to its whims.

Communication is not simply a matter of having the right Gifts to make himself understood. He has to understand what the spirit wants and respects for reasons beyond figuring out proper chiminage. Just like how certain gestures or slang terms mean vastly different things in different human cultures, what is considered a show of dominance to a wolf-spirit will startle and frighten away a bird-spirit. Every spirit comes with its own context as important for communication as any language.

Many spirits, especially urban ones, comprehend human languages and idiom just fine. But such linguistic skills only come from contact and experience. A spirit with no knowledge of humanity — or something from the Deep Umbra that’s older than any living language — simply might be unable to communicate in a way that a modern homid Garou would understand.

Everything that a spirit sees and does is filtered through its nature. As a result, some spirits understand certain concepts better than others. Even seemingly basic ideas such as states of matter or the passage of time can confuse a spirit whose purview doesn’t allow for those concepts. Some spirits, no matter how intelligent or aware they seem, suffer severe cognitive dissonance if confronted with information or concepts they can’t grasp.

Spirits also have bans and taboos — things they can’t abide or won’t do. Most Garou know of these through the restrictions of totems but every spirit has its limits. Most of them are obvious, like earth elementals having to remain in contact with the ground or a rattlesnake-spirit not being able to attack without warning. Awareness of a spirit’s ban can provide leverage or prevent catastrophic faux pas.

When dealing with the Garou, elementals and Naturae focus on the tangible. Not merely issues of the physical world, but as a whole their priorities revolve around basic needs and realities. They’re not ‘simple’ but they’re consistent and interactions with them are unlikely to suddenly involve abstract concepts or philosophy. Each one has a role and a purpose and addressing it outside of that context is unlikely to get results.

The modern world is very good at producing exceptions to traditional practices and views, however. Newer breeds of elementals coalesce from Essence more and more frequently and while they are still distinctly ‘elemental’ in their outlook they are much more in tune with the modern world. A typical electricity elemental won’t be an expert on the modern cutting-edge technology, but even a Gaffling instinctively understands circuits and wires and related concepts.

Epiphlings are even more likely to filter their experiences through the concept they represent but their more abstract nature allows for greater ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Most worry less about tangible distractions

and present a more cerebral demeanor. Garou capable of keeping the Epiphling's nature in mind will have an easier time speaking with and understanding the concept-spirits.

At the other end of the spectrum, spirits of riddles and enigmas are not only more abstract but in theory are more inclined to wrap their minds around new and strange ideas. Theirs is a language and mindset of difficult questions, however. It is easier to get through to one but maintaining a coherent conversation is a challenge. Gaffling puzzle-spirits, being more oriented around their peculiar idiom, are sometimes incapable of answering straightforward questions — or at least, incapable of answering them in a straightforward manner.

Dealing with the Triat

While they are no less complex than Gaian spirits like elementals or Naturae, the spirits that actively and directly serve different facets of the Triat are often easier to understand. Their masters' goals make the spirits' needs and purposes easier to predict. It's easier to know what to ask and easier to know what to offer to get something out of them. This can be a controversial topic when it comes to dealing with Weaver and Wyrms spirits but tribes known to toe the line compare it to police officers and their informants.

Weaver spirits desire order and reject ambiguity. As simple as it seems, to remember that when dealing with a Pattern Spider their priorities aren't like those of a neat-freak roommate. The Weaver seeks a state of 'perfect' unending order for the world, and its lesser servants exist for the sole purpose of reinforcing that. Something as simple as reporting a dangerous, chaotic event to the nearest Geomid shows that a werewolf has priorities worth assisting. The Weaver and its servants are patient and willing to stabilize the world one piece at a time.

Speaking of chaotic situations, Wyld spirits are difficult and slippery. Unlike most Gaian spirits, Wyld spirits often seem to come into being with no rhyme or reason. They come in recognizable breeds and categories but their very nature requires flexibility with labels and classification. They represent an active piece of primal chaos that has gone out into the world to change it in some way like sparks floating away from a bonfire. Enlisting their help is difficult and dangerous but Garou skilled at appealing to their erratic needs can find an ally suited to confounding the Weaver or Wyrms.

Banes are all too eager to speak with Garou approaching peacefully. The opportunity for temptation and corruption is almost too much for the typical Bane to pass up. Few reasonable Garou would ever make a deal or negotiate with a Bane and fewer still are willing to admit to it. Desperate circumstances can lead to offering a weak, relatively unimportant Bane the opportunity to flee with its skin intact

in return for it selling out something bigger and nastier. Actually accepting anything from a Bane, whether kept or not, is farther than most shapeshifters are willing to go.

Chiminage

A major part of communicating with spirits is an understanding of chiminage. Chiminage is the offering made by a shapeshifter, or a rare spiritually-aware human, when requesting a spirit's favor or blessing. Chiminage is the means by which she shows proper respect to a spirit and how highly she values its blessings. It's possible that chiminage, representing the notion that sacrifice and cooperation benefit the world as a whole, is an inherent aspect of Gaia Herself.

Almost every spirit innately understands the concept of chiminage and expects it when dealing with petitioners. The exceptions are almost always those Wyld spirits whose chaotic natures don't allow for upholding agreements and pacts. Even then, however, the right offering can get their attention and possibly their assistance. Chiminage is almost a language of its own, and wise Garou who speak it well can forge the sorts of agreements that once led to Incarna offering patronage to the tribes of the Garou Nation.

Understanding how and when to offer chiminage is practically a basic survival skill in the Umbra. Requesting a spirit's aid and failing to offer a favor of equal or greater magnitude is the equivalent of telling the spirit that its assistance means so little it's not worth paying for. If the spirit has an easygoing nature and the shapeshifter is having a very good day, the spirit might simply refuse to help. Spirits with an aggressive or proud nature, not to mention spirits of war or predatory creatures, are likely to respond with direct and sudden violence.

Chiminage can — and often is — the best way to make amends to a spirit that has been offended or wronged in some way. A shapeshifter who hasn't stepped on any toes can also use chiminage to earn a good reputation with a given spirit or brood, which might lead to an increase in Renown. Word of such generosity travels fast among spirits and maintaining a good reputation is its own reward. Black Spiral Dancers known for dealing fairly with Banes actually disgust some Gaian spirits less than they otherwise would. Sometimes a spirit performing a favor for a shapeshifter goes a little above and beyond, possibly leaving him owing it a little something extra. In turn, he is expected to offer a favor in thanks, and thus begins a long-standing cycle of spirit and shapeshifter maintaining ties of mutual cooperation by continuously one-upping each other on favors.

Chiminage can take a number of different forms. The most common is a quest on the spirit's behalf, often to improve the spirit's purview or station in some way. Some spirits simply want the Garou to socially promote its abilities and generosity so everyone knows they can also deal

WHEN ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

From a Storyteller's perspective, what should matter is whether the players make an attempt to properly show their characters' sincerity. The effort to treat the spirit honorably and respectfully should mean more than the exact number of trash cans the pack knocks over for a cockroach-spirit. Storytellers, trust your instincts; if it feels right, it probably is.

with it. Someone wanting to bind the spirit into a fetish is likely to make the vessel as attractive to the spirit as possible, often using materials that align with or potentially glorify the spirit's nature. Some spirits ask for minor but strange favors, like a rat-spirit asking a werewolf to destroy all mousetraps he sees for a time — which makes trips to the hardware store awkward — or a night-spirit asking each member of the pack to share with it a secret they've never told anyone.

For some spirits, particularly Wyld-aspected spirits or spirits of war or violence, the opportunity to do the favor is chiminage enough. If it sounds interesting or chaotic enough, a Wyld-aspected spirit just might go ahead and do it on principle. Some aggressive or predatory spirits, if asked to assist with a battle or slaying a Wyrmbest, will come along for the experience itself. These circumstances aren't common by any means but are a pleasant surprise when they do happen.

Some spirits want something material. Some spirits appreciate certain objects and want one brought to them, or they wish an object or creature sacrificed in their name. Some material forms of chiminage can be difficult to find, necessitating an expedition deep into the Umbra or finding the resting place of an obscure relic in the physical world.

Even though different spirits are unique entities, especially as they grow more powerful, different breeds of spirits tend towards common wants or needs when it comes to chiminage. Experienced Theurges keep track of what sorts of chiminage appeal to different spirits, both for personal reference and to teach cubs as part of their training. The sorts of things that a Rat Gaffling in one region would want are roughly the same as a Rat Jaggling in another region, the primary differences being scale and specific context — like the availability of mousetraps.

Some spirits want to haggle and negotiate specifics, but it's still important to have an offer ready to lay down on the

metaphorical table anyway. The werewolf might offer a thousand origami cranes to a crane-spirit. The spirit then insists that he make them from paper the color of its feathers and left among tree branches in the forest north of its dwelling. Even if he expects a counter-offer, demonstrating that he's ready to negotiate at all makes the werewolf look good to the spirit.

Spiritual Ecology

Even though they aren't properly 'alive' in the sense that most humans would consider, spirits do behave like living creatures. They're born, they feed, they grow, some reproduce, and they can die. They're capable of thought and will and agency, albeit oriented around their purview. They have instincts and act out their own versions of what scholars would call a proper life-cycle.

Actions and objects in the physical world leave impressions in the spiritual plane. An action that has an impact on the world around it or the creation of something new or a powerful emotion leaves a mark like a footprint in wet sand. If the impression is deep and sturdy enough, Essence flows into and coalesces around that mark and becomes a spiritual entity in the 'shape' of that impression. Sometimes these impressions are caused by physical events like car crashes. Other times, massive emotional outpouring like the grief over a national tragedy creates them.

Some of these spirits are born at that place, hidden within the Penumbra or in the physical object itself. Others come into being in the Deep Umbra, far from whatever triggered their birth and sometimes at the behest of a much more powerful spirit. Wyld spirits in particular often emerge from spontaneous eruptions of Essence.

Broods

All along the different levels of spiritual awareness and power, spirits organize themselves into families called broods much like the Garou do tribes. (W20, p. 373) All of these broods descend from one or more Incarnae and, by extension, Gaia. And as with the Garou tribes, a number of these relations are through adoption rather than having any direct relation to the Incarna patron. They are all related in terms of philosophy or nature, though to a spirit the distinction is fuzzy.

Whether born literally from other spirits in the brood or adopted, they consider each other true family. Even if they don't all get along with each other, they still show proper respect to each other and reverence to the Incarna from which they're descended. If a shapeshifter greatly offends a spirit of Chimera's brood, Chimerlings and other assorted spirits of wisdom or enigmas will be hostile and uncooperative until she can redeem herself. In extreme cases

she might have difficulty dealing with other shapeshifters following Chimera as a pack or personal totem. She needs to make amends, starting with an offer of chiminage, and if she is fortunate the right chiminage will settle the debt.

On the other hand, on very rare occasions a spirit brood will adopt a worthy werewolf into its ranks. Spirits treat such an honored individual as family, a bond even closer than the one between the Garou and her tribal totem if they aren't already one and the same. Such a blessing often comes with an offer to serve the brood after death in the form of an ancestor spirit. A rare honor but an Incarna has few higher ways to honor one of the Garou.

Spirit relations can get complicated in ways that make perfect sense to the spirits themselves but seem random or arbitrary to someone raised in the physical world where heritage and genealogy are understood concepts. For example, after the fall of the White Howlers their tribal totem Lion was adopted by Griffin and is considered a part of his brood in every way that matters. At the same time, the aspect of Lion that serves as patron to the Simba werelions isn't related to Griffin at all. As Incarna exist on multiple levels of reality at once, this is part of the natural order to them whereas beings that experience one reality at a time might need a chart to wrap their heads around it.

Gafflings

Depending on whatever spawned them, whether event or Incarna, new spirits often come into being as Gafflings. Gafflings are the equivalent of simple animal wildlife of the spirit world, sometimes appearing clever but only really capable of perceiving the world in specific ways. Each has a purpose, even if they can't understand or articulate what that purpose is. For many spirits, 'what I do' is the same as 'what I am' and that is true for typical Gafflings more than anything else.

Gafflings see the world in terms of their nature, like people who view their experiences through the lens of their job. They have a duty that they obsessively uphold whether that duty is to represent the interests of a breed of animal or to maintain a section of the Pattern Web. Each is a servant of something much larger and much more aware than themselves and even the ones smart enough to question orders have no desire to. They feed by attaching themselves to an object or place that allows them to embody what they are — all a Gaffling generally wants to do — and sustain themselves from the energy that comes from that interaction.

Spirits also gain sustenance by entering the state of Slumber, replenishing themselves like humans do by sleeping. For many spirits of objects and places, simply being available if needed is enough to do their duty so they conserve their strength through hibernation. In some cases, acting out the place in the ecosystem appropriate to their

STORY SEED: BACK TO BITE YOU

The player characters' pack comes across a new pack, perhaps from a nearby caern or rather new to the local sept. This pack acts as if they harbor some animosity against the characters, determined to thwart them politically without compromising the greater duty to Gaia. Their totem is identical to a Jaggling that has previously given them a lot of grief but the rival pack seems to be unaware of this past history.

Has a thorn in the characters' side become powerful enough to cause greater problems? Has their conflict actually been with an Incarna's avatar that they mistook for a 'normal' spirit? Or has a Jaggling simply discovered the ability to mimic an Incarna's ability to sponsor a pack? And if so, how?

But most important of all, what is the true purpose of this new pack?

concept allows them to feed. The spirit of a predatory animal hunts and eats the spirits of appropriate prey animals, consuming their essence for themselves.

Banes also often feed by consuming other spirits, but do so solely for destruction's sake with no respect for the natural order.

Jaggings

If a Gaffling's purview increases in strength, like a sapling growing into a massive oak or the 'adopted' weapon of a war-spirit being used in battle after battle, the spirit itself can grow. As spirits grow in strength and power they become more aware. Eventually, if they cross a particular threshold, the spirit develops into a Jaggling. They can also earn 'promotions' from more powerful spirits and take on greater roles in the world. The oak spirit is empowered to represent the forest; the war-spirit takes a military unit or base under its wing.

If Gafflings are the clever animals of the spiritual world, Jaggings are the people. Once a spirit has progressed beyond the Gaffling level, they are no longer an appendage of their superiors but have usually achieved sentience in the way humanity would think of it. Jaggings have thoughts and personalities and agendas all their own. While they typically serve Incarnae, Jaggings' goals don't always have to align with those of their master.

Jaggings feed much like Gafflings do, although they are more likely to reap the benefits of service and worship

than replenishing themselves through Slumber. They tend to be more actively involved in spiritual affairs, primarily due to their awareness and self-determination, and because of their greater strength their purview grows in scope as well. A forest is a more important part of nature than an individual tree. A military unit will see more action than any individual rifle.

Because Jagglings encompass such a broad range of spiritual strength, from something on the power level of a Stormcrow to the sheer might of the Nexus Crawlers or a caern totem, a Jaggling has a lot of room to grow without ascending to a higher rank. Few ever achieve that higher degree of enlightenment and fewer still accomplish it without help. The transition from Jaggling to Incarna is almost always a promotion by another Incarna on the rare occasions it happens at all.

Incarnae

New Incarnae rise up from the ranks of the Jagglings at the will of their own deific patrons. They often serve Gaia or a member of the Triat more or less directly, though some serve a Celestine like Helios or Luna. Jagglings rise to the rank of Incarna often because some new concept has come into being and needs a patron to fill the new spiritual niche. Sometimes they fill the role of a destroyed Incarna. In rare circumstances Gaia or the Triat will cre-

ate an Incarnae wholecloth, like the werespiders' mistress Queen Ananasa.

Incarnae embody important concepts — organized war or all oak trees as a whole — but they represent those concepts as opposed to literally being them. If the Oak Incarna is slain a new one will rise from the Jagglings to take its place, but not every oak tree in the world would wither and fall in the meantime. It would, however, mean a certain degree of disarray in the Incarna's minions and retainers for a time. Fortunately for Jagglings, the ability to take hold of such a situation is usually a good way to prove itself worthy of the vacated position.

Because of the nature of such promotions a Jaggling's form shifts as it fills the vacated spot, sometimes muddying attempts to trace its history. As a result some Incarnae appear almost from nowhere. Some Incarnae leave well-known and traceable histories as they rise through the ranks. O' Mighty Dolla' (*Rage Across the World*, p. 55), for example, started as a Gaffling nickel-spirit and became a Jaggling quarter-spirit before achieving Incarna status after World War I. Conversely, his rival Easy Credit is entirely unknown before her 1995 appearance.

Most Garou encounters with an Incarna are likely to be with their pack or tribal totem. When werewolves do so, except for the rarest of occasions, they're interacting with an avatar rather than the spirit itself — a fragment of the



Incarna's power made manifest as a Jaggling. Even a pack that has truly proven itself worthy of a totem's protection or guidance can't expect to be able to command the totem's full attention on a regular basis. The avatar speaks with the Incarna's authority with regards to the pack even though it is considered a spirit in and of itself.

Incarnae neither fall into Slumber nor stop to take the time to feed. They don't have to. At this point, their Celestine patrons and the forces over which they have dominion sustain them. They're too tightly woven into the grand scheme of things to require traditional sources of spiritual energy.

Celestines

To the various Changing Breeds and their allies, Incarnae and Celestines both come across like deities of a sort. Celestines, however, are the real deal in terms of raw power. Unlike an Incarna, a Celestine is literally the thing it represents and produces its phenomenon rather than the other way around. Each astronomical phenomenon has a spiritual presence, the true form of which is all but unknowable. Helios and Luna are literally the sun and moon and if slain those heavenly bodies would cease to be.

That said, destroying a Celestine is nigh impossible. Even the asteroid belt, a destroyed planet, still has a presence in the Aetherial Realm and an active Incarna. If destroying a planet isn't enough to snuff out a Planetary Incarna, what would it take to kill a Celestine? The Apocalypse likely contains the answer to that question.

Despite the common belief among Incarnae that they could eventually ascend to the level of Celestine, the myths and fantasies so far prove to be just that. None of the few identified Celestines worked their up the hierarchy to earn their place in the heavens as far as anyone knows. Some legends suggest that, as the Mother Goddess, Gaia Herself may have the power to elevate an Incarna to this level.

Celestines reside in both the Deep Umbra and the Aetherial Realm (p. 46), in personal realms where their power and awareness are effectively infinite. They only rarely send avatars to Earth and instead focus their energies to nudge and influence those capable of listening. A Celestine can maintain multiple avatars at once. The power of even a weak avatar is such that they only dare affect the physical world with light, indirect touches. The unenlightened mistake their few, mysterious efforts for astrological forces or similar phenomena.

Outside the Cycle: Emanations

Emanations are spirits that neither fall into the hierarchy nor the life-cycle of spirits in a traditional manner. They only manifest in the Near Realms, apparently produced by the realm itself, and they often appear as humans or animals appropriate to the realm in question. These denizens are

EMANATION MECHANICS

Emanations don't use traditional spirit traits. Instead, they have the normal assortment of Attributes, Abilities, and so forth. If a Garou gets into conflict with the hunters of Wolfhome or a Nazi guard in the Atrocity Realm, the Storyteller rolls the emanation's Dexterity + Firearms instead of Willpower to attack. When the Garou retaliates, his attacks harm the emanation's health levels, not its Essence.

often unaware of their spiritual nature and act like normal people or animals for their given context. As expressions of a particular realm's nature, some Garou suspect they're a way for the realms to attempt to communicate with material beings.

The biggest difference between emanations and the traditional spirits also found in the Near Realms is that emanations do not follow the same rules as spirits do. A human-looking emanation is a human for all intents and purposes — it has no sense of its rank or purpose, no Charms, and no ban. That makes it very hard for werewolves to differentiate between the emanations of tortured souls in Malfestas and the very real humans that the Wyrms' minions bring to that blasphemous place.

Not every entity found in the Near Realms is an emanation. Most of them are typical spirits who simply make their homes in places suited to them and use the normal traits of Rage, Willpower, etc. A Pattern Spider in the CyberRealm is pretty much the same as it is anywhere else in the Umbra. Emanations are specifically the human and animal-shaped 'mundane' creatures that make up a Near Realm's population.

An Animistic World

To those well versed in the ways of spirits, the world teems with life. As previously described, spirits aren't living things in the traditional sense but the animistic world of the Garou isn't entirely unlike a thriving forest. A traveler walks through a forest and sees all manner of creatures, some strange-looking and brightly colored, climbing on trees and alighting on branches. He hears other things moving unseen through leaves and bushes, sometimes but not always leaving noticeable traces and scents. He doesn't see but knows for a fact that some creatures squirm within the earth or behind a layer of tree bark. He takes their

presence for granted rather than disturb them. Parts of this world are just beyond reach and perception.

Humans see the animistic world like a young child at his first stage play. People speak and move on stage, drawing all of the attention, while figures skitter about backstage manipulating props and bits of the scenery. He only sees what's in front of the curtain or shining down into his eyes from up above. He doesn't look for strings or arms moving the sun across the sky, nor does he notice actors vanishing through a trap door or stagehands hiding props for later. It's the magic of the theatre at work and he only sees the show. The adults, however, know about the complicated technical work backstage that to a child may as well be the workings of Santa Claus.

As steeped as they are in broods and hierarchies, the spiritual denizens of the Umbra don't have to think about their place in the grand scheme of things. Some can, and fewer go to the effort to do so, but each has a niche and not only are they inclined to remain within that niche, they view everything through the perspective the niche provides. Spirits follow their instincts defined by their nature and brood even if they are aware enough to do otherwise. Each is part of the greater whole of Gaia and even corrupted spirits antithetical to Her well-being play out whichever role is assigned to them by their nature.

To a spirit, fulfilling its purpose and going about its duties is as natural as a human breathing air. When a human has to perform a task outside of an oxygen-rich environment – perhaps underwater or in space – her first priority is making sure that she can breathe. When in the new environment, she sees everything through a helmet carrying the familiar air with her. A spirit removed from its natural environment also perceives the world through the only context it knows.

Some spirits are very good at mimicking human behaviors and expressions, and the more intelligent Jagglings can carry on conversations like a regular person. But unless part of their nature is to do so, those spirits simply won't see things through a human standpoint. It's like they have a cheat sheet with lines used to get certain responses and translate those responses into their own way of thinking. Some even have a very good 'translation book' but they always lose some nuance. That's not even taking into account local elements demanding the spirits' attention away from the pointless chattering that engages them.

A spirit identifies the world around it through the context of its nature and experience. If a spirit doesn't need to know what a car is, it likely won't. A cat-spirit has a context to understand a car, though it understands a car to be a *"wheeled people-carrying murder-box."* An electrical elemental knows what a car is but sees it as an *"engine and circuits full of flame and power hauling us to and fro."* A spirit of enigmas, if asked, would explain a car as a *"fast metal*

transport, moves people many places, yet the people remain still." All three types of spirits may or may not know to translate that concept into the word "car" when talking to one of the Garou, but in their internal script they still see a car as something particular based on their experiences and nature.

This section presents examples of the experiences of three different spirits. Each offers a glimpse into how each of these different spirits interacts with the world and with werewolves, and the Garou's perspective on each encounter.

Cockroach Gaffling

Scurry from dark place to dark place. Watch the spiders through the cracks. They do not see, they never see. Not as interesting as the ants in my old trash-box but I have orders. I will have to deal with the ants later.

I feel warmth of satisfaction from the basement. Nestmates in the Realm enjoy a meal. A good meal. Sour and sweet and syrupy. Spiders dancing along their webs, nothing special. I might enjoy the feast.

Antenna tingles. Something calls from down below. Take care, nestmates, coming!

Scurry through cracks, dark place to dark place. Tight spots feel good to crawl through. They feel natural. Feel right.

The basement glows. Not trouble. Glow is a picture of Cockroach-shape. The meal was an offering. I accept the invitation and find a nice, tight space to squeeze through the Weaver-wall.

Out of the land of shadow, into the land of light, but still dark. Now I glow, just a little bit. The nestmates feast on white boxes full of noodles and rotten meat and plants. Syrupy-sweet.

The picture is here, too, drawn in syrupy-sweetness nearby. A young Garou kneels next to it. She jumps when I skitter out of the shadows.

"Gaia, you're big," she whispers. She is young, a pup, and has Cockroach-scent on her. Weaver-things in her pockets.

"Greetings, Glass Walker," I hiss to her. She is here to talk to me, I will be friendly and polite. She knows the proper ways and is friend to my brood. "You share a fine meal. I thank you."

"I thank you for your time." She is nervous, skittery. I want her to stay but I like the skittery. Tricky. "But I need help."

"How may I assist?" I can take time away from the spiders for the Garou.

"There is a building near here, a skyscraper. Um, a tall building covered with windows. It's new," she explains. "I'm looking for secret ways in."

"Cracks in the walls?"

"Yes, exactly." She relaxes. Not as skittery now. "A crack big enough for my pack, someplace... someplace dark and

shadowy, out of the light, where they can't see. The building is a block and a half that way." She points at the wall.

My antennae twitch as I picture the human roads of concrete. I know this city, I know this building. I remember it smells clean. Too clean. Clean and poison. I do not like that place. I am now skittery, which feels right, but makes it hard to help.

"I'll help you more," she says. Does she also know the skittery? "I've heard you have a problem with ants in the dumpster."

Yes! Yes she knows the ants! The ants that bite, the ants that swarm, so frustrating!

"You know this problem?" I ask. "The ants have my trash-box?"

"Yes, the Gafflings moving in from the park into your territory." I do not know the park as well but I do not correct the Glass Walker. "If I chase them off and give you your trash-box back, will you show me how to get into the building?"

"I will look now. When the trash-box is mine, meet me back here."

Scurry back into the shadows and back through the Weaver-wall. Back into the land of shadow. Scurry out onto the street, slip through piles of trash. Antenna shows me other spirits moving around above. More of the Weaver-spiders closer and closer to the shiny building. Feel them above, but focus on road ahead.

Shiny building is just a shadow here, but Pattern Spiders building and webbing. Always building and webbing. Giving the shadow walls and beams. I see webs of light above and in a hole in the ground.

Scurry through shadows, down into hole. Familiar smell down there. Antenna feel something useful, familiar, tasty.

Sewer! Old sewer tunnel in the Realm! Part of the basement but closed. Spiders think the wall is enough.

The wall has cracks. Scurry to find how to get Glass Walker to the cracks.

Thinking about the tasty trash-box.

A Garou's Perspective

Catherine "Chatty Cathy" Novak, Glass Walker Theurge

The building was pretty much abandoned when I got there. I expected it to be filthy and infested, judging from its neglected condition. I collected trash from the special bins back at the caern — we have something like a compost heap for fast food for when we need to make offerings to Cockroach's brood — and hauled a bunch of Chinese takeout down into the basement.

Yup, definitely infested. So from what they told me about dealing with roach spirits, I set the food out and waited for the regular cockroaches to come for it. The

spirit should notice and appreciate that. I remained pretty still so they wouldn't see me as a threat, and when — ugh, when it looked like the pile of trash was squirming from the bugs, I opened up a foul-smelling container and drew the glyph for Cockroach in rancid sauce on the floor. And waited.

I'm not sure what I expected, but I definitely wasn't expecting to see a cockroach the size of a corgi climbing out from behind the pile of trash. Its carapace was covered in glowing blue runes like circuitry. I might've cursed under my breath in shock. I don't remember what I said but it didn't seem to notice.

Two things stick with me about the negotiation. First, there was the fact that it was eager to help. I think my being nervous might have helped, somehow, but I don't know if it was trying to weird me out or if it was just naturally that creepy. Which brings me to the second thing.

I — err, I wasn't expecting a giant cockroach to have body language. When it was curious, it tilted its head a little like a dog. When I talked about the building, it tensed up and got twitchy. And then it looked, well, as relieved as a huge-ass bug can get when I offered to help it with the ant-spirits. Thank you, Aunt Sophie, for suggesting I look for other spirits that might be giving the roach trouble.

But the fact that it was so eager made me feel a little less like I needed eighty showers when it left. So as soon as it was gone I decided to strike while the iron was hot and see about getting those spirits out of its favorite dumpster. No point in wasting a good impression.

Dreams-of-the-Horizon, Chimerling Jagglings

They arrive just as I tire of waiting for something to happen. I rest on my perch and watch them appear.

"Greetings, Crossroads Pack," I call out once they come close enough. "You travel swiftly today."

"It's good to see you, Dreams-of-the-Horizon," says the pack alpha, a Strider soon to reach Athro. His body language suggests he is prepared for this meeting but he does not carry the aura of prophecy. I do not know why he knows my name when I do not know his, but this pack feels comfortable enough that I will hear them out.

"You seek instruction." I decide to get down to business. "You have a young one traveling the long road with you and will ask me to teach him to dream of things yet to be."

"I've been dreaming of you." The young oracle-to-be speaks up, though his words make little sense. "In the dreams you said you would be ready to teach me on the next crescent moon." The boy gestures to the night sky above. The moon does indeed bear Luna's smile, soon to vanish when she turns her eyes from the world for a few

days. His alpha seems frustrated. I foresee harsh words later, but the reason why does not interest me.

I have no clue what he means when he says why he knows to be here. I do not plan to give his young Theurge the summoning dream, nor am I doing so right now. The confusion I feel at speaking with the Garou seems familiar. But then of course it is like this, with their strange language.

"You speak strangely, child," I sigh, prompting an embarrassed look from him. "My concern is the next congregation of Lunes. I will seek their council once Luna returns and cannot waste any time until I know where. I cannot teach you the Gift until I can resolve the matter."

The alpha, showing his own foresight, produces a map. He unrolls it and sets it down, where I see that it does indeed predict where I will find the Lunes. His accurate prediction pleases me and he smiles to show he observes my satisfaction.

"We begin soon. Sit." I gesture to a spot next to the map. The young Theurge kneels expectantly and with a tap of my talon on his forehead he falls into dreams. His pack, before I must instruct them to do so, takes up defensive positions as I dive into his dreams. I look forward to showing him how to unweave dreams of the now and reweave them into dreams yet to be, especially since I will be teaching myself in the process.

An Hour Ago

Marcus "Owl's Drifting Feather" Hakimi, Silent Strider
Philodox and Alpha of the Crossroads Pack

The spirit we're going to see won't need long to teach you the Gift, but you have to understand something. A lot of times you'd learn this from an owl spirit. This one is owl-shaped, but he's a dream spirit instead. But he likes us and he's gotten along well with us so it's an honor for him to summon you.

Pay attention, though, because this is very important. He'll teach you the Gift of prophetic dreams but he won't know why. He doesn't see the world like we do. He won't know that he sent you the summoning dreams. He only knows the now and the yet to be, not the was.

That's why we figured out where those Lunes are going to be and drew up the map. With this Dreams-of-the-Horizon, you need to have the chiminage right away because he'll forget if you have to go get it. Fortunately, he pretty much wants the same thing every time.

I'm not saying let me do all of the talking. I'm saying that if you do have to speak up, keep it to the present and future tense. If you talk about things that have happened, or even the possibility that something happened before that meeting, you'll confuse him. Don't embarrass us.

The Memory-Broker, a Juggling of Things Forgotten

When the intruder arrives in my domain, I know it immediately. I'm not sure how long since the last one, but I always know when I have guests. I gaze into the swirling mists of my private realm, images of objects and people appearing for but moments before dissipating to show something else.

The intruder is easy to spot. She's the only thing solid here, carefully balancing on wriggling ribbons of mist and coherent dreams. She won't see me until I wish it, so I watch her for a few moments. Anyone capable of finding my hidey-hole is someone worth worrying about.

She is short but muscular with short, dark hair and calloused hands. She is worried about a friend, and I can hear her silently gathering her thoughts to explain her situation, rearranging her memories to best share her story. She doesn't know it but wisps and flickers of those memories flit about her head like gnats, visible only to me. Her life has been one of great excitement but also great violence.

I draw myself up from shadow to become visible to her, and she flinches. I never know what they see when they see me. It's always something different but provokes the same reaction.

She speaks but her words scatter my mists and send waves of agony and unease through me. It is very much like what the humans experience when they overindulge in drink. At least, when they drink enough to forget it the next day.

"I'm sorry," she quickly says as I reform. "I introduced myself out of habit, I should know better."

"That you should," I reply, aware it was an accident but not much caring.

I briefly wonder how my voice sounded to her. Who does she see in my shape? Just out of her line of sight images and shapes from her life, things she hasn't thought about in years, flicker and dance through the mist.

"I need your help. I know that you collect peoples' forgotten memories. I need you to help me find one."

"I don't casually part with my treasures."

"You'll sell them," she growls, low and ominous.

"Well, yes, I was getting to that part of the conversation."

That provokes a flash of frustration in her eyes. I do not enjoy fighting but I do get a certain thrill when one of the werewolves gets mad and briefly forgets just how much they need to not disincorporate me. It's a rotten habit.

"And you'll buy them as well." She forces herself to calm down.

Now I am intrigued but also worried about where this is going. “Go on,” I say after a moment’s thought.

“Some time in the last few days, a pack of — “ She looked like she had just bit into a rotten fruit. “A pack of Wyrms-wolves came to barter. They stole memories from a friend of mine.”

Hiding is suddenly very attractive to me.

“I can’t tell you anything about them,” I said. “Client-spirit privilege and such. Good day.”

I slowly back into the shadow when she yells.

“My friend’s name is — “ is all she gets out before everything blurs and swirls with agony. I strain to solidify, cursing in a language long dead to human ears.

“I don’t need claws to hurt you, spirit. I know your bans and weaknesses.” Her eyes flicker like drawn steel in moonlight. “I don’t need to know about the Spirals. But I need the memories they took. I’m sure they’re here.” She gestures to the mist around her, waving a hand through it and scattering an image of a child’s toy.

From glimpses of the memories I see hovering around her, I know who she is talking about. And she is right: I can definitely help her.

“What do you have to trade?” I ask as my form finally stabilizes.

“What do you want?”

I cluck my tongue in the manner of the humans. “Bad form. You knew you would need something. You did not forget.”

“For my first time dealing with you, I wanted to let you set the price.”

She tells the truth, and I have to admit that such a notion appeals to my ego.

“Fine. Bring me something of your friend’s. Something she’ll miss. But she can’t know you’ve taken it. She has to think she misplaced it. I’ll know if she thinks it’s lost.”

Delicious indecision flickers over the werewolf’s face as she considers possibilities.

“If you really want to know what your friend saw, what really happened...” I trail off. I call up a piece of the memory she is after and a terrified, sobbing shriek of panic and disbelief echoes through my realm. The werewolf’s face grows pale.

“Okay, fine!” she yells, eyes watering. “I’ll bring it back soon. And you’d better have that memory for me.”

“Oh, I’ll remember,” I reply. “Don’t forget your way back,” I add as she runs to the portal that led her here.

Things Best Remembered

Martina “Clears-the-Ancient-Path” Sarris, *Black Fury Ragabash*

It took me every trick I knew to find my way to the spirit’s little pocket realm. After the better part of a day,

I’d given up until I suddenly remembered one last bit that almost never works, but just this once it panned out. I had to forget that I was looking for it, getting lost while focusing on my worries.

The negotiation went badly at first. I immediately introduced myself, forgetting that names are anathema to the spirit. It likes things that are forgotten and lost, and names declare things to be too important to lose.

In my defense, it threw me off-guard when it took the shape of Uncle Derek. I’d put him out of my mind years ago, after the argument with my mother that split up our family. The memory-broker was a bit of a sleaze. I’d bet he did it intentionally. He pissed me off, but I had to remember I was there for Carla. Whatever she’d seen those Spirals do was just too much. The only way to put a stop to the nightmares and crying was to find out what happened and, well, I didn’t have a plan beyond that. I’d cross that bridge when it came to it.

I’m not proud of leaning on its ban to antagonize it. I’d do it again in a heartbeat, if I had to. And I almost lost it when it named its price. How could I steal from someone that trusted me? I mean, after I got what I wanted I could probably tell her, but I know things go badly when you double-cross a spirit.

It almost makes it worse that I know she’d forgive me if she found out.

Denizens of the Velvet Shadow

Anything in the world — be that physical objects, animals, and even ideas — has a spirit, and can have that spirit awakened. This section provides a number of sample spirits that Storytellers can use whole-cloth or pillage for inspiration.

Banes

Bioweapon

These banes are terrible mutations of normal spirits of war, bound to the corrupting violence of the Wyrms. Bioweapons are spirits of insidious infectious agents alive and capable of replicating inside a host body. The banes move easily from person to person, infecting and corrupting as they go, leaving behind hollowed out husks ready to be possessed by another bane.

Pentex Corporation uses Magadon Pharmaceuticals to culture Bioweapons. The original goal was to use these banes to prime people to become fomori, in hopes that they would last longer. The project failed, and Pentex repurposed the banes to spread the Wyrms’ corruption as

far and wide as possible. Magadon has deployed the banes in third world countries in the form of medicines, infecting sick individuals. As the banes take hold, they corrupt healthcare workers, and eventually entire communities.

Based on the success of Bioweapons in smaller communities, Pentex has increased utilization of these banes and spread to the global arena. Garou are just now catching wind of the number of major first world countries stockpiling bioweapons, and the banes associated with them. The threat of Pentex infesting the entire world with Bioweapon banes has the Garou Nation on high alert. Septs encourage their members and Kinfolk to engage in politics in an attempt to gain access to important decision making individuals. Dealing with the situation is a priority, but with the banes already in the hands of many governments, a resolution requires intense work and planning.

Rage: 6, **Willpower:** 4, **Gnosis:** 6, **Essence:** 16

Charms: Corruption, Possession

Image: In the physical realm, Bioweapons appear as dark smudges in the air, thick miasmas that cling to a possessed person's head and chest. In the Umbra, they appear as small black voids, where no light escapes their inky black surfaces.

Blood Currency

Blood Currencies are a new manifestation of the Wurm's corruption. They evolved from Blood Moneys, minor Banes that attach themselves to large denomination dollar bills. Blood Moneys feed on the crimes of those who handle those bills – drug deals, blackmail, assassination, and human trafficking of every kind – and inspire their victims to engage in more extreme forms of degradation. Blood Moneys seldom receive more than a few opportunities to feed before the bill makes its way into a bank vault or becomes so worn out that it is destroyed, and so they seldom present a threat except on a very local scale.

Blood Currencies, however, take advantage of the rise of virtual currencies – or cryptocurrencies. World governments do not monitor or regulate these mediums of exchange, and they afford considerable anonymity to those who use them. While these virtual currencies attract some perfectly legitimate business, they frequently facilitate commercial interests that range from distasteful to abominable. Users buy into a virtual currency either with mainstream currencies

(dollars, euros, pounds, etc.) or by providing goods or services to existing users and taking their pay in the virtual currency. A distributed network of computer servers tracks the virtual money and facilitates its exchange between users.

When a Blood Currency infects one of these servers, however, it feeds on all the misery that the virtual currency funds. For example, a single Silkbuck valued at approximately one hundred U.S. dollars moves from a snuff film maker to an assassin, from an assassin to a pimp, from a pimp to a kidnapper who “recruits” prostitutes, from a kidnapper to a drug dealer, and from a drug dealer to a weapons dealer. Each transaction carries the spiritual weight of the horrible deeds it funds as it passes through the Bane-infected server, and the Blood Currency grows fatter with each transaction. While users can sell most cryptocurrencies to other users for ordinary currency, the Blood

Currency discourages users from ever selling any part of their stake. They instead feel compelled to buy more misery-generating goods and services with it.

To ensure a fresh supply of victims, the Blood Currency's server will occasionally email ordinary people telling them they've won a recently unlocked supply of the virtual currency. Those who accept the windfall find themselves tempted to spend it on things they might never purchase – whether out of fear of being caught or because it reflects a secret desire they are ashamed of. As their supply of the cryptocurrency dwindles, they seek ways to earn more, and many soon become purveyors of their own twisted goods and services.

Rage: 4, **Willpower:** 7, **Gnosis:** 9, **Essence:** 20

Charms: Blighted Touch, Control Electrical Systems, Corruption, Possession

Image: In the physical world, Blood Currencies are almost undetectable except by the traces of Wurm scent they leave on the servers they possess and on those who have handled their virtual currency. In the Umbra, they resemble a mass of writhing serpents comprised of pure darkness.



Consciousness

Consciousness is a strange Bane. Consciousness is an embodiment of loud, permeating communication. Each Consciousness Bane centers on a different topic, and attempts to blast that message to the world. This might be a noble cause, if not for the Bane's ability to instill witnesses with fear and loathing. Most witnesses burst into a violent frenzy upon experiencing Consciousness's message. Even if they can't comprehend the message due to language barriers, ignorance, or other impediments, Consciousness inspires rage and vitriol.

Consciousness Banes generally don't live long; they have a terrible time keeping to themselves. They're often found marching out in the open, where they fall victim to their own rage-induced listeners. If their listeners have nobody else to attack, they'll lash out at the Consciousness.

Rage: 2, **Willpower:** 6, **Gnosis:** 8, **Essence:** 16

Charms: Incite Frenzy

Image: Consciousness exists as a nigh-incoherent jumble of information. It's loud, it's convoluted, and it's extensive. The information is never presented with full clarity. If the Consciousness takes the shape of a computer screen, jumbled, garbled text will interrupt the intended message. If it takes the shape of a radio broadcast, it'll wash with static and interrupting signals. Newspapers are wet and mashed together. Regardless of the form, Consciousness requires scrutiny and attention to decipher more than just a jumbled mess.

Flame Wars

This spirit is the manifestation of a large scale conversation in which diplomacy has broken down and rational debate has given way to shouted invective — but where no violence has erupted. In previous centuries these spirits were rare, appearing during a relative handful of fierce political and religious debates. As a single drop of any of the participants' blood shed by another participant causes Flame Wars to wither and die, few such spirits lasted long enough to awaken — much less spread their mayhem to others.

It wasn't until the rise of the Internet that Flame Wars proliferated enough to attract the attention of the Garou — particularly the Glass Walkers, who gave them their name. Although these spirits can create unwanted interpersonal conflict, some Garou bind them into fetishes to sow discord between their enemies.

Rage: 7, **Willpower:** 4, **Gnosis:** 6, **Essence:** 17

Charms: Blast, Brother Against Brother*

• **Brother Against Brother:** The Flame War almost never fights its own battles. It instead convinces its enemies to fight each other. The Storyteller makes a Rage roll for the spirit

(the difficulty is each target's Willpower). On a success, the Charm has the following effect until the end of the scene:

Successes Effect

1	The target refuses to take orders from any of the other targets and becomes argumentative if anyone bosses him around. If forced to obey, the target does so sulkily and behaves passive-aggressively.
2	The target argues with the other targets and refuses to cooperate with them. Werewolves gain one point of Rage and make a Rage roll to resist frenzy.
3	The target hurls insults and makes threats directed at other targets in an attempt to provoke them into attacking her. Werewolves subjected to this treatment make a Rage roll to resist frenzy. Other sentient beings are likely to respond in kind and may escalate the situation further.
4	The target starts something — throws a punch, draws a weapon, kicks in a door, etc. This almost certainly turns into a brawl, but the target's rage turns to panic as soon as he suffers bashing damage equal to his Stamina or even one point of lethal or aggravated damage. If this happens, the target flees the scene. If the target is a werewolf, she makes a Rage roll to resist frenzy, and the difficulty of the roll is decreased by two (minimum 2).
5	The target goes berserk and attacks all the other targets. Werewolves frenzy and make a Rage roll with the difficulty of the roll reduced by two (minimum 2). Those who score any successes on this frenzy enter the thrall of the Wyrms. Other creatures fight until they are incapacitated or no other targets remain on the scene.
6+	The target goes berserk as above, but his fury is not limited to fellow victims. He attacks innocent bystanders and friends, unable to distinguish between friend and foe. If the target is a werewolf, he must enter a berserk frenzy. Fox frenzy is not an option even if he is not in the thrall of the Wyrms.

Image: Flame Wars almost never manifest, but when they do they look as they do in the Umbra — a sphere of turbulent air a foot across. Those within ten yards of a Flame War can hear the whispered insinuations and too-dry sarcasm that gave it life. Those within ten feet plunge into a veritable hailstorm of raised voices that shout every imaginable form of insult and wield creative profanity like hammers on the inside of the skull.

Reroute

Reroute is a Bane of espionage and distraction. While the Wyrms hasn't made as much headway into the Internet as it would like, it has advanced in secondary avenues. Reroute helps to obscure the Weaver's electronic soldiers, hiding their tracks and offering smokescreens for attack against bastions of the Wyld.

Functionally speaking, it cloaks everything in its vicinity. The spider clasps on to larger Weaver spirits as they pass by, hiding them from sight. Whenever possible, Reroute will help obscure a Weaver nest under attack, offering them the element of surprise and ease of escape.

Rage: 4, Willpower: 8, Gnosis: 4, Essence: 16

Charms: Blighted Touch, Obscure*, Open Moon Bridge

- **Obscure:** The spirit blankets a small area with a wash of neutral, boring space. It moves outward from the creature about five feet per dot of the spirit's Gnosis. Roll Will. Any Perception or Investigation action must exceed the Will roll's successes to notice anything interesting or out of place within. As well, anything within the cloud gains the spirit's Gnosis as a bonus to any rolls to hide or move unseen.

Image: Reroute looks the part of its host systems. It's a small, oily black creature with eight legs that could be mistaken for a Pattern Spider in a crowd, or at a casual glance. Under its oily exterior lies hundreds of tiny wires, designed to interface with whatever systems are nearby. When using its Obscure Charm, the area around it becomes pixelated, blurry, and vague, so it can attach to larger spirits passing by, obscuring them as well.

Obscenity

Obscenity is an insidious, unhealthy, irrational sense of disgust made flesh. Obscenity spawns forth from a desire to denigrate and control others, not dissimilar from dehumanizing, objectifying impulses toward slavery and sadism. When enough people with these desires for control get together, an Obscenity births from their negativity.

The Obscenity delivers upon these people exactly what they think they want. It brings outrage. It brings pain. It brings control. Typically, its victims don't know that they were wrong to want these things until it's too late. The Bane slides into them, and takes possession of them, in the way they wish to possess and control others. An Obscenity Bane will perpetuate

its existence, inspiring others into these emotions in order to create other Banes.

Often, an Obscenity will emerge around hate groups, and intolerant religious sects. Most rural cults will have at least one Obscenity Bane nesting nearby, if not actively influencing its leadership.

Rage: 7, Willpower: 3, Gnosis: 3, Essence: 13

Charms: Corruption, Incite Frenzy, Possession

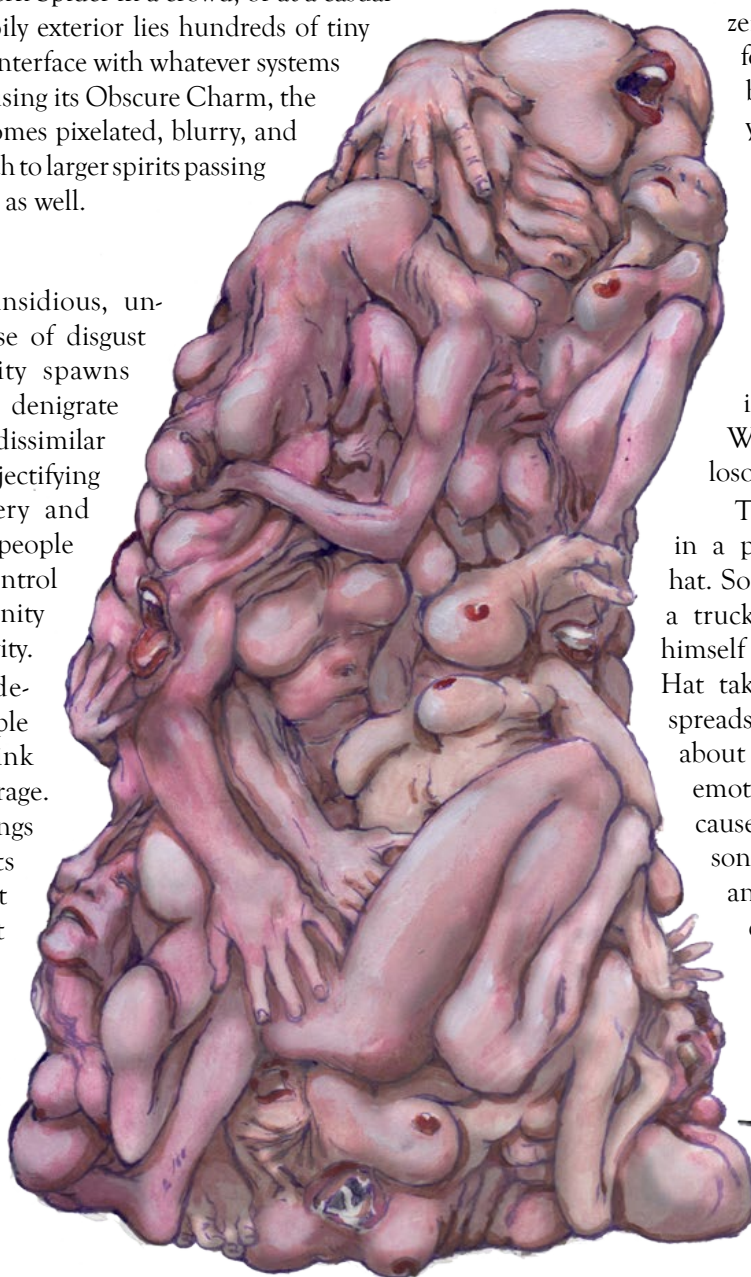
Image: Obscenity appears like so much flesh all in one place. In fact, more flesh than should logically be able to fit in a physical space. It looks like arms, legs, hands, asses, breasts, cheeks, feet, tongues, and everything in between, writhing together in a vague pillar. It caresses itself, bites itself, screams at itself, and fondles itself all over, constantly, and to horrific effect.

Trendy Hat

Trendy Hat is a spirit of cultural zeitgeist, one the Wyrms has fostered well. Trendy Hat embodies the self-celebration of young men. Specifically young men that fancy themselves as "gentlemen," clinging to outdated concepts of chivalry. The original idea of chivalry is selfish and objectifying, when these individuals present it as being beneficial it hurts the culture at large. Which makes it a prime philosophy for Wyrms emanations.

The Trendy Hat anchors itself in a piece of clothing, usually a hat. Sometimes a trilby. Sometimes a trucker hat. The wearer opens himself to possession, which Trendy Hat takes eagerly. The spirit then spreads negativity and anguish all about itself. It manipulates others' emotions, it uses its Charms to cause complications in their personal and romantic relationships, and it destroys what they hold dear. Then, it looks for an opening. When the victim is vulnerable enough to allow possession, it births a Bane to possess them.

Needless to say, Garou root Trendy Hats out quickly once discovered. Left



unchecked, a Trendy Hat can leave an empire of Banes in its wake.

Rage: 6, **Willpower:** 6, **Gnosis:** 8, **Essence:** 20

Charms: Blighted Touch, Corruption, Incite Frenzy, Possession

Image: The Trendy Hat is a faint, almost invisible humanoid feature with vague, dumpy features. Atop its head is the signature hat, the only opaque part of the creature.

Witch Hunt

Witch Hunt is a spirit of uncompromising desire to end a target for a perceived slight, whether or not the target is actually guilty. Where Obscenity (see p. 124) is a general sense of outrage brought to fore, Witch Hunt always has a very specific target.

Witch Hunt's mobs always come about quickly and viciously. Often, an entire community will wake up in the middle of the night, grabbing weapons. They'll seek out the spirit's victim, string him up, and head back to bed without a second thought.

Witch Hunt chooses its victim. The choice is typically arbitrary; the affected mob finds reasons and rationalizes the hunt. It uses its Corruption Charm to affect the mob. So long as it is encouraging the mob to attack the victim, it only costs a single Essence to bring the a number of mob members equal to Witch Hunt's Gnosis to bear.

Rage: 6, **Willpower:** 6, **Gnosis:** 8, **Essence:** 20

Charms: Corruption (Special), Peek, Possession

Image: Witch Hunt looks like a ghostly priest, with shadows for vestments and fire coming from his mouth at every word.

Gaian Spirits

City Mascot

The fans of professional sports teams awaken City Mascots, feeding the spirits with their devotion and their intense interest in every aspect of the game. The team takes the role of the city's army of warrior-priests, dedicated to its defense and that of its patron's honor. Their contests against the teams of rival cities have replaced the battles between eternally warring city-states.

City Mascots often act as servants of City Mothers (or Fathers) but Theurges frequently find them more approachable — or at least easier to coax. A local shapeshifter can often attract a City Mascot's attention simply by wearing branded merchandise to a game. These spirits regard their billion dollar stadiums as great cathedrals, and the shouts of their fans as prayers of devotion. A supplicant who approaches the City Mascot as it basks in the glory of its warriors' victory can usually win an audience with it. A few cities have multiple City Mascots that represent

different sports. In some places the City Mascots engage in friendly rivalries. In others, they compete fiercely for the hearts of local fans.

A City Mascot has an inherent mistrust of outsiders. It will tolerate out-of-town fans, especially those who take care to express their devotion to it. In the company of those hailing from a rival city, the spirit remains aloof at best, and it might actually play tricks on or otherwise inconvenience those it believes worship a rival City Mascot. Despite their apparent devotion, rival cities can sometimes woo a City Mascot elsewhere by offering it a greater and more glorious stadium or a more fanatical pool of worshippers. When the City Mascot's team goes to another city, the spirit goes with it, and it quickly adopts the character of its new home.

These spirits can be valuable allies, however, for few know the city and its inhabitants better than they do. They also occasionally come to shapeshifters for help dealing with problems they cannot resolve on their own, and more than one pack has been put on the scent of a Wyrms plot by a tip from a City Mascot.

Rage: 8, **Willpower:** 8, **Gnosis:** 5, **Essence:** 21

Charms: Armor, Cleanse the Blight, Disorient, Healing, Illuminate, Open Moon Bridge, Shapeshift, Tracking

Image: A City Mascot's true form frequently resembles the official mascot of the team that gave it form. As a tutelary deity it also reflects the architecture, history, and present fortunes of the city it protects. The personalities and customs of its citizens similarly come across in its temperament and mannerisms.

City Tree

City Tree is just what it sounds like, a tree in the city. City Tree is an iconic rebel of the urban landscape; it forces its way through concrete, feeding itself with trash and polluted water, yet still rises strong. It bears fruit that feeds the homeless and less fortunate. It holds the precious little topsoil in place, guaranteeing years of fertility for those few square feet. It's a little victory for the Wyld, but sometimes a little victory means the difference between survival and all-out defeat.

City Tree doesn't exist by every single tree in the city, only the very healthy ones that stand against the odds. But where City Tree stands, Garou should take notice. It's a very useful spirit that will help any working toward making the city inhabitable for its kin. It can heal and protect war-torn warriors.

Rage: 4, **Willpower:** 8, **Gnosis:** 8, **Essence:** 20

Charms: City Tree's Trunk*, Cleanse the Blight, Create Wind, Healing

- **City Tree's Trunk:** The spirit has a permanent soak pool of eight dice, and can increase that by the spirit's Gnosis by spending two points of Essence. Alternatively, it can

grant this additional soak to other spirits by spending another point of Essence. A spirit receiving this blessing applies the soak pool from City Tree's Trunk in addition to its own armor.

Image: City Tree looks like a tree. It's vaguely anthropomorphized. It uses its branch/limbs to press down on the ground, constantly trying to free itself from the cement around it. It struggles slowly and constantly. Knife cuts along its bark act as eyes and a mouth. It speaks with frustration and impatience, but shows empathy and concern for the city and its inhabitants. It's often found with numerous other, smaller spirits around. It shields them from bigger threats, and becomes a makeshift shelter for the less capable.

Crowdfunding

With the rise of the Internet, creative professionals have looked to new outlets to sponsor their endeavors. Crowdfunding has grown as a particularly successful method over the past couple of years. With crowdfunding, a creative professional puts forward a proposal, puts it before the Internet's collective scrutiny, then would-be patrons offer money to bring the project to life.

Though not strictly Gaian spirits, Crowdfunding spirits are undirected at the moment of their creation. They soon move towards one of the Triat, depending on their environment. Depending on their bent, they can possess Corruption (Wyrn), Solidify Reality (Weaver), or Break Reality (Wyld) as an additional Charm. Those few that remain in service to Gaia often attach themselves to projects that benefit a community and promote harmony or re-growth. They possess Cleanse the Blight as an extra Charm. For each character attacking Crowdfunding in the same round, the spirit regains one point of Essence. This can go above its normal limit, but anything above the limit fades at the end of the scene.

Rage: 2, **Willpower:** 10, **Gnosis:** 4, **Essence:** 16

Charms: Armor, Healing, Peek, Break Reality/Cleanse the Blight/Corruption/Solidify Reality (see above)

Image: Every Crowdfunding spirit takes

on a symbolic composite of its source. The spirit for the Golden State 2™ film project looks like a stainless steel bear that spews gold from its every orifice. The Machine Age Time Machine Prototype™ project looks like a small brass dirigible. The Aspect System Game™ project looks like a mechanized gorilla with a raygun.

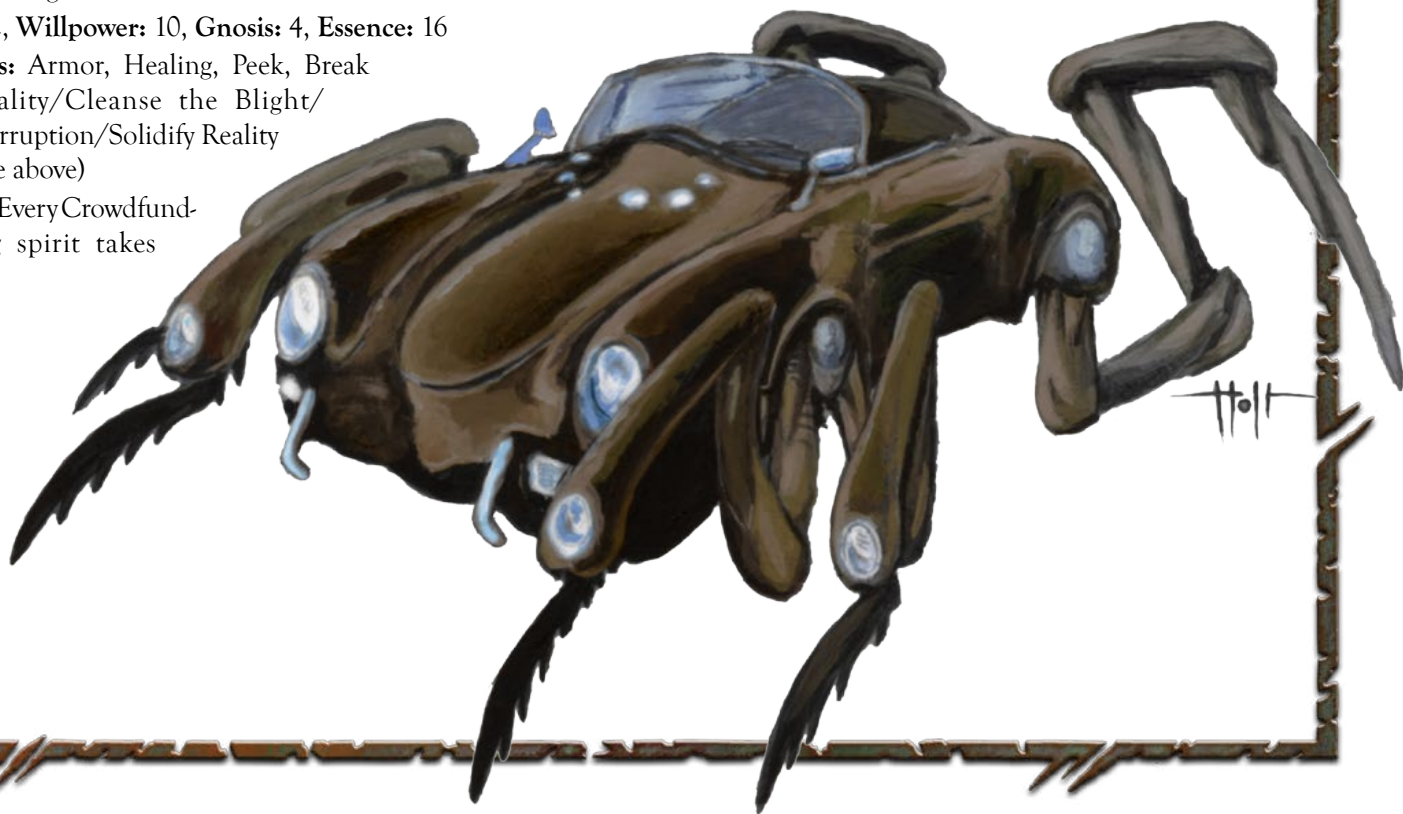
Gridlock Beetle

These urban spirits form along busy, congested streets and highways. A single traffic jam or a few months of lane closures caused by road construction doesn't generate enough frustration to give birth to a Gridlock Beetle. Only the most notorious of traffic trouble spots in large cities can awaken them. Gridlock Beetles coaxed away from their native territory wield considerable influence over travel times. Glass Walkers and other urban Garou sometimes dispatch them to delay an enemy, but they are more often called upon to expedite the shapeshifter's journeys.

Rage: 5, **Willpower:** 5, **Gnosis:** 5, **Essence:** 15

Charms: Calcify, Charmed Journey*, Road Rage*

- **Charmed Journey:** The Gridlock Beetle rolls Gnosis at a Difficulty of (2 + the number of targets). Until the end of the scene, the target's overland movement suffers no ordinary obstacles or delays. All the lights turn green. No one cuts her off in traffic and then drives under the speed limit. Even police will not stop her regardless of how far over the speed limit she is driving. This benefit extends to movement on foot or off-road, as well. The Jeep doesn't get stuck in the mud. The frozen lake holds up under the traveler's weight. Even in a crowd, bystanders never seem to get in her way as she pursues her target (or flees her pursuer). The target subtracts two from the difficulties of all relevant Drive and Athletics rolls (minimum 3).



- **Road Rage:** The Gridlock Beetle rolls Rage at a Difficulty equal to the target's Willpower. Until the end of the scene, countless small obstacles or minor delays hamper the target's overland movement—a traffic jam, a flat tire, a stubbed toe, etc. The target adds two to the difficulties of all relevant Drive and Athletics rolls (maximum 9). Additionally, shapeshifters under the influence of this Charm use Rage less effectively. Reduce the total amount of Rage the target may spend in a single turn by one (to a minimum of zero) for as long as the Charm lasts.

Image: Gridlock Beetles look like the body of a car walking on six insectoid legs and are the size of large dogs. Each “model” of Gridlock Beetle exhibits personality quirks in keeping with similar such spirits of that model. Sports car-bodied Beetles are often impatient and favor making haste over slowing down opponents, for example, while large sedans sometimes create delays for passersby out of pure spite. Storytellers should feel free to adjust the Rage, Gnosis, and Willpower of a Gridlock Beetle based on its model.

Meme

Memes are a type of Epiphling, spirits of the thoughts and ideas that take hold in the mind of people, and spread in a pattern very similar to an infectious disease. These conceptual spirits are often small and short lived, flitting from one thing to the next without much heed to anything but the information they feel they must convey. Most Memes are found within the Astral Umbra, unable to grow big enough to leave, sometimes so small and short lived as to barely gain notice. Some gain quite a bit of power and influence, pushing their idea into the minds of people across the world.

Each Meme spirit represents a single idea. They thrive on that idea being remembered and passed from one person to another. In the past, the growth of a Meme spirit was often slow and ponderous, taking years for a particular Meme to grow enough to reach beyond its original location, or to eventually spread influence across the world. Memes of old were content to grow in power and influence slowly, and did very little to actively push ideas forward, expecting word of mouth to be sufficient.

As the world enters the information age, Memes have the capability to grow and gain influence faster than ever. This also means a Meme can die just as fast as it grows, sometimes gaining worldwide influence, only to be forgotten within the year. The prospect of such a fast death scares most Memes. They take an active role in spreading ideas to people, pushing concepts and information into as many channels as they can in hopes to create a legacy that lasts. Some Memes fluctuate in power and influence as their ideas travel the globe and back again — their popularity rekindled sometimes without rhyme or reason.

Some of the most powerful Meme spirits have been able to adapt and evolve, conveying their information in new forms as a previous form loses traction and people forget it. These Memes urge people to share information through whatever medium possible. Some Garou find binding Memes to fetishes helps them retain large amounts of information to share later.

Rage: 4, **Willpower:** 7, **Gnosis:** 8, **Essence:** 19

Charms: Control Electrical Systems, Short Out

Image: When materialized, Memes take on the image of whatever bit of information they conveyed. Sometimes the information is so small and truncated, the spirit looks like nothing more than a photograph or scrawled word on a piece of paper. Otherwise, the spirit may take on the form of an animal or person to which the information pertains. In the Umbra, the spirits look like small pieces of the Pattern Web, etched into a defined space.

Murica

America the beautiful, America the bold, America the brave. Whatever else may be said about America, it is among the most diverse and multicultural nations in the world, and the people who live there love it. They may not all agree on how it should be run, or if its foreign policy is the best, but they all agree that they love the country they live in. That love often leads to deep divides between the citizens of the nation, the sheer force of their patriotism blinding them to truths on either side of a line.

Nation spirits are as old as nations, the pride of nationalism and the loyalty of its citizens giving birth to spirits who protect those lands. Murica is no different, though he is one of the youngest such spirits, and is still undergoing quite a bit of change. National pride takes many forms, and in the past, Murica called himself America the Beautiful. He was born of the ashes of the many smaller tribal spirits that protected the Native American nations before the Western settlement of the land. As the new people of the land adopted it as their home, America the Beautiful began to change to match the atmosphere of desire for freedom wrapped in a self-serving sense of entitlement. As the American people grew, so did America the Beautiful, growing up next to American Dream and O'Mighty Dolla, and later Easy Credit. The loyalty of the citizens to their homeland and their nation made him powerful, and his influence stretched from one coast to another.

Despite economic hardships and sometimes lack of faith in the country, America the Beautiful always had a hand in pushing patriotism back into the forefront of the nation's mind. He changed drastically from year to year, becoming more aggressively protective of the country in sync with the citizens.

In recent years, after struggling to maintain belief in the American way of life, he took up the mantle of Murica as a drastic effort. He chose to adopt a symbol of blind pa-

triotism rather than true nationalism to keep people vested in him. No longer did they need to truly understand the hardships their beloved nation was going through. Instead one simple word, uttered in defiance, washed away all their doubts about America's greatness. He urges paradoxes such as fighting for freedom and justice, enforcing military acts to ensure peace, and the rights of citizens to protect their families with weapons. He doesn't care if the American people fight amongst themselves over what is right and wrong, as long as they have passion for him and the land they live in.

Over the years, Murica's aggressive nature and self-serving interests negatively influenced some of the other great spirits of the nation. Each became self-centered, in an attempt to counteract Murica's influence on the nation. This effect led to increased national debt and inflation as O'Mighty Dolla's influence waned. It caused the banking crisis of 2008 as Easy Credit became too greedy. It is also evident in the vast number of unemployed and indebted college graduates who still strive for an American Dream that is moving further from their grasps.

Rage: 10, **Willpower:** 8, **Gnosis:** 7, **Essence:** 40

Charms: Cleanse the Blight, Create Wind, Flood, Freezes, Peek, Shapeshift

Image: When Murica manifests in the physical realm, he prefers to take on the form of a darkly tanned man wearing blue jeans, a button-down shirt, a large belt buckle, a bolo tie, and a Stetson hat. It talks slowly and precise, but does not have a drawl or any other discernable accent. In the Umbra, it looks like a waving American flag.

Nuntius

Nuntiuses are spirits of the ice and rock debris that shoots through space, unattached to any particular celestial body. These spirits act as messengers, moving between the Celestines in the Deep Umbra and their avatars in the Aetherial Realm, or even carrying messages from one Celestine to another.

Some Nuntiuses are only found within the Deep Umbra — spirits of objects that never come within the Earth's orbit and lack any grounding there. These spirits are large alien creatures with little to no concept or care for the Earth or her inhabitants. Other Nuntiuses are small and short lived, breaking away from a Celestine bearing a specific message. Once the Nuntius delivers his message he returns home, waiting for redeployment. Some never make it back, remaining attached to the new Celestine after delivering their message. Yet, others still are large and long lived traveling the sky in predictable patterns carrying messages across the Umbra a bit like a mail service among the stars.

The most common Nuntiuses are small affairs, what people would call meteors often making a single pass from one spirit to another. Garou sometimes report watching them burn tracks through the night sky as the spirit travels into the Near Realms to deliver its message. Mostly the spirits

deliver messages from a Celestine to one of its Jaggings, or from a Totem to its pack spirit. On rare occasions, a spirit is sent from far off with a message for Gaia herself.

Despite the probability that the spirit only has a single message to deliver, they are all quite well informed. Nuntiuses share messages and information with each other, sometimes to speed a message along, and sometimes just for the sheer joy of sharing a message. It seems that what one Nuntius knows, all Nuntiuses will know in short order. If a Garou is lucky, he can stop one of these little spirits in its tracks and ask for news or information. They move fast though, and stopping them is not an easy prospect.

Rage: 4, **Willpower:** 5, **Gnosis:** 5, **Essence:** 14

Charms: Open Moon Bridge, Peek, Swift Flight, Tracking

Image: Nuntiuses appear in the physical realm as the rock or ice they are bound to. In the Umbra, they appear as bright flashes of colorful light, streaking across the sky.

Srador — King of Pets

Humans have domesticated animals for millennia. Dogs serve as hunting companions and household guardians. Horses and oxen act as beasts of burden. Cows and sheep provide food and wool.

Not all the animals a person invites into his home have a practical purpose, however. The pet snake will never hunt at her master's side, nor will the rat or the hamster be more than a furry ball of warmth that spends most of its time in a cage. They are just pets, and Srador is the spirit who rules over them. It isn't a glamorous empire, but it's enough to earn Srador a surprisingly high place in the spirit world.

One pet species is notably absent from Srador's divine portfolio — cats. Domesticated cats are unusual in that they serve a function among humans by controlling the rodent population, but they do so because they choose to and not because Man trained them to hunt mice. Millennia ago, Srador courted Tibia, the First among Cats, and offered to make her his queen in exchange for her influence over her feline sons and daughters. Tibia refused him, insisting that housecats would remain independent — neither pet nor partner of Man but a companion by choice. Srador bears cats an eternal grudge because of her refusal, and he will not countenance any felines within his demesne. He treats any host or a guest who has regular contact with housecats with royal suspicion and may send his spies to watch her.

Srador grants audiences to those shapeshifters who seek him out, although he can be imperious and condescending. Anyone willing to turn over an unfinished basement for his use and lavish him with all the gifts a pet frog could desire — fresh water, regular food offerings, and a suitable environment — can easily coax Srador into an alliance. In exchange for these trifles, Srador will teach Gifts related to leadership, communication, and navigating the Umbra, as

well as those taught by frog spirits (such as Hare's Leap – W20 p. 158).

Srador richly rewards those envoys who provide him with truly impressive and decadent gifts – such as a hundred frog “subjects” captured by the supplicant’s own hands, a large plastic castle with working drawbridge, and an indoor breeding pond. He arranges meetings between his most lavish hosts and the circle of misfit spirits that hover around him hoping to eat the proverbial crumbs from his table. While these spirits are not powerful, some have useful, if strange, Charms at their disposal. Srador also hosts lavish banquets for many of his spirit peers – some of whom are quite powerful and influential in their area.

Age: 4, **Willpower:** 9, **Gnosis:** 9, **Essence:** 22

Charms: Demand Audience*, Open Moon Bridge, Peek, Royal Decree*, Tongues*

- **Demand Audience:** As Rite of Summoning (W20 p. 212) with the following alterations: Srador can complete the ritual in a single turn. The spirits who arrive are passively benign (if Gafflings) or neutral (if Jagglings) toward Srador. More powerful spirits are always initially hostile, so Srador seldom uses this Charm to summon them. The number of successes instead determines the speed with which the spirit answers Srador’s summons:

Successes Effect

1	The spirit arrives within 24 hours.
2	The spirit arrives within an hour.
3	The spirit arrives immediately.
4+	For each additional success after the third another spirit comes with the summoned spirit. These are either lesser spirits with natures similar to that of the target, or random spirits of a similar power level.

Srador cannot use this Charm more than once per day.

- **Royal Decree:** This Charm is functionally the same as the Theurge Gift Command Spirit (W20 p. 164), except it costs one Essence per command instead of one Willpower, and the Storyteller rolls Srador’s Gnosis



(difficulty is the spirit’s Gnosis) to activate the Charm. It also functions on creatures of half-spirit, including shapeshifters (difficulty is the shapeshifter’s Willpower), but Srador seldom calls upon it unless he is desperate.

- **Tongues:** Srador understands all human and spirit languages and is able to speak telepathically. He can address one, some, or all creatures within 100 yards, and they hear him in their native tongues. If a target has a Gift or other supernatural ability the grants her resistance to mental influence, the Storyteller rolls Gnosis (difficulty equal to the target’s Willpower).

Image: In the Umbra, Srador looks like a large frog that wears a golden crown and an ermine cloak. His amphibious face is remarkably expressive, capable of conveying the full range of human emotions. In the physical world he looks like a large but otherwise ordinary frog.

The Road Warrior

In the late 1940s, men took to the road looking for adventure and excitement, riding motorcycles with wind in their hair and not a care in the world. The popularity of riding bikes grew, and soon clubs were formed based on the common love of riding. Thus was born the Road Warrior, the spirit of freedom on the open road.

The Road Warrior has seen her ups and downs. She has grown steadily over time, but spent a few decades slowing progress as interest and memberships stagnated. She has made a recent comeback as American television’s recent focus on motorcycle clubs and biker gangs has sparked interest in more people than ever before.

The Road Warrior is a wanderer, traveling all across the country, feeding on the sense of adventure and power that comes from groups of people riding together. She is often found at motorcycle rallies and races, absorbing the energy of the love of the road. She uses her influence to

entice people to take to the road, journeying for the sake of travel without a destination in mind.

Age: 6, **Willpower:** 6, **Gnosis:** 8, **Essence:** 20

Charms: Open Moon Bridge, Tracking

Image: In the physical realm the Road Warrior appears as a woman in riding leathers with a black tinted helmet covering her head. In the Umbra, the spirit appears as a great winged creature made of metallic gears and sharp metal feathers. In either case, she smells of dust and the faint odor of oil.

Weaver Spirits

Bot-Net

Bot-Net is a specialized type of spirit of gossip or rumors. They first sprang up as a few weak spirits more than thirty-five years ago. As people used bulletin boards to talk about topics of interest, create meetings, and to talk about general socializing, the spirits formed around them. Bot-Nets remained low in numbers as small Gafflings for some time, growing slowly and steadily as more and more people started to use the internet for socializing. In the late 1990s, the spirits exploded in numbers as people across the world turned from socializing in groups of people, to socializing through the internet.

Bot-Nets do not gather with people, but instead reside in the server hosting whatever media site they most identify with. Sometimes, a spirit hangs out near a person whose sole interaction is through the internet — each update, like, +1, #tag, @reply, and share feeds the spirit, making it fatter. Bot-Nets entice people to use the internet for socializing more and more, encouraging them to eschew face-to-face activities in favor of updating or checking different social media sites.

Bot-Nets love conversing and sharing stories, information, and news. They are just as happy to lend an ear to any who will share a story with them, as they are to tell one. They pass news quickly, though they rarely bother to get the whole story or make sure the story is correct before adding it to their repertoire of information. Most Bot-Nets take on characteristics of the servers they inhabit. Sometimes

only holding small easily digested social niceties and information, other times enjoying lengthy stories or news of loved ones. They can cause problems by spreading lies and rumors about people, or revealing secrets as whistle blowers. Most werewolves attempt to ensure that any one Bot-Net does not gain too much power and influence over people.

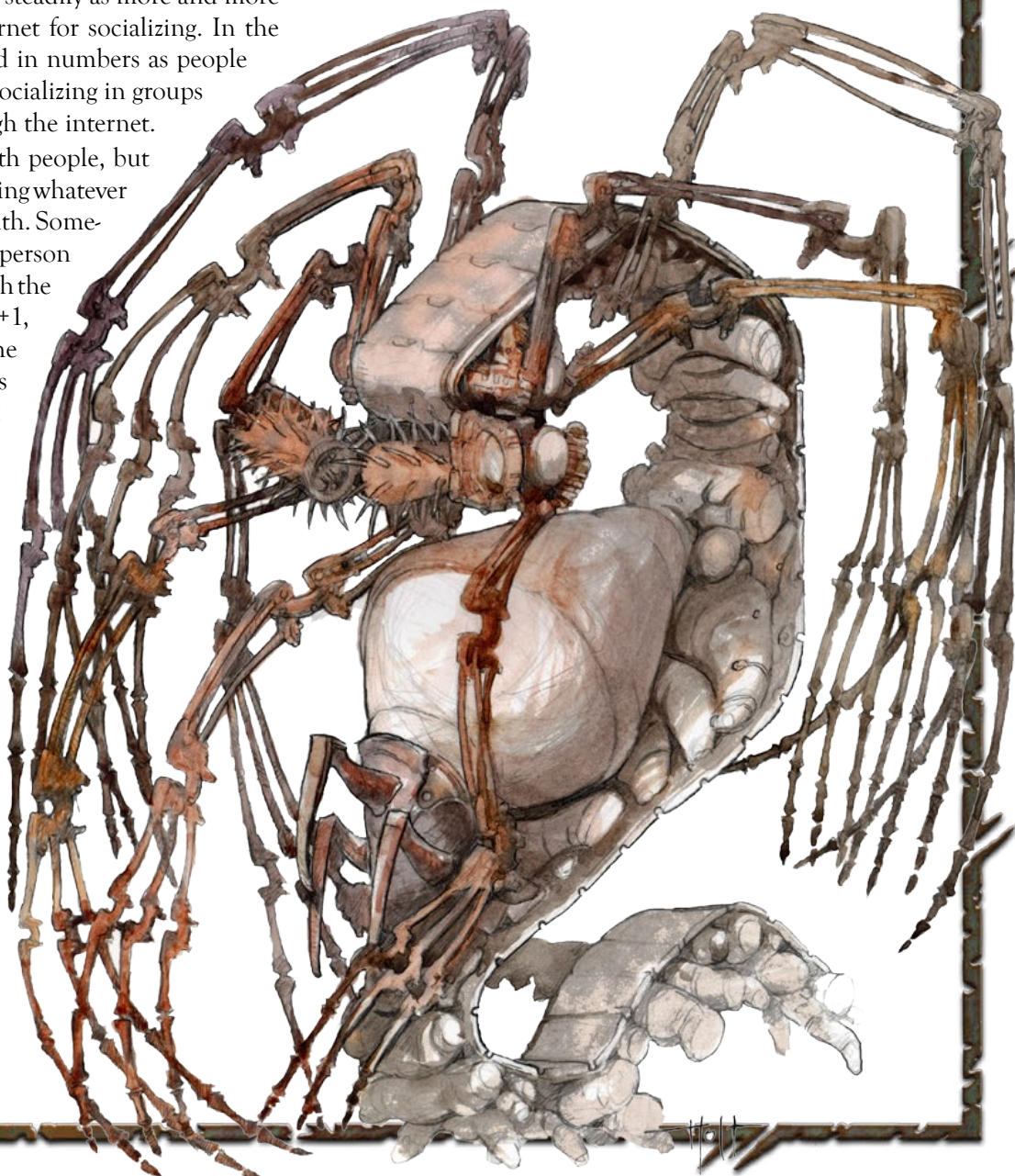
Age: 4, **Willpower:** 5, **Gnosis:** 4, **Essence:** 13

Charms: Control Electrical Systems, Peek, Short Out

Image: When Bot-Nets manifest, they appear as a cloud of pop-up windows — filled with photos, and scrolling text — opening and closing continuously. They give off a faint sound of millions of voices droning on in a soft chorus of status updates and sharing. Bot-Nets look exactly the same in the Umbra, though bits of the Pattern Web can be seen holding each of the pop-up windows together.

Brand Loyalty

Brand Loyalty is a Weaver embodiment that specializes in codifying and compartmentalizing every little thing it



comes across. It skitters around, organizing and defining. To Brand Loyalty, everything must have a label, and is a rogue element until properly grouped.

It uses seemingly arbitrary criteria to organize people and objects. It'll physically grab and move things into piles. Of course, many things don't wish to be grabbed and filed away, so Brand Loyalty coats the victim in cable ties, cellophane, and vinyl labeling.

As it creeps along the ground, it codifies the space beneath it, crafting a makeshift red carpet out of vinyl.

Rage: 4, Willpower: 10, Gnosis: 6, Essence: 20

Charms: Calcify, Solidify Reality, Spirit Static

Image: Brand Loyalty is a machine that stands just taller than a Crinos form Garou. It looks something like a thresher, an assembly line, a cement mixer, and a series of nine robotic armatures that act as limbs all jumbled together. It can expand out to double its size, and usually does so when cornered or threatened. Its limbs unfold into dozens of narrow replicas of themselves, stretching up to thirty feet to grab every object in its vicinity for rapid collection.

Consumer Entertainment

Consumer Entertainment is a Weaver spirit that represents the perverse love of a more ridiculous corner of consumer culture. People will buy into civilization, into a system, purely because it's a system. People deny the opportunity to choose something better; they simply choose to like what's in front of them, by virtue of convenience. Consumer Entertainment is all about embracing the lowest common denominator, and justifying it by any means necessary.

Consumer Entertainment has a special version of the Shapeshifting Charm. He cannot use it on himself, but can use it on anyone else that is willing. The Charm can only make subjects look like him. If they resist, the Charm fails instantly. If a target resists, he'll immediately switch to the Calcify Charm, attempting to wrap the resisting element into the Pattern Web. With any particularly strong resistance to his calcification, Consumer Entertainment will lash out with violent, ear-splitting shouting. Represent this with the Blast Charm.

Rage: 6, Willpower: 6, Gnosis: 8, Essence: 20

Charms: Blast, Calcify, Shapeshifting (Special, see above)

Image: Consumer Entertainment is a stark white male with shiny teeth, blonde hair, and just enough attitude to catch attention, but not upset or offend anyone. Around him is a panel of tiny figures that all look something like him. Every time he begins to act against someone, he pauses to wait for the panel's approval. Assuming he does as expected, and makes no surprising choices, they approve enthusiastically. If they disapprove, he withdraws his action instantly, and switches courses of action back to the expected.

Cultural Appropriation

Cultural Appropriation is a timeless spirit with a fresh, modern name, and a newfound power. Every dominant culture has borne at least some of these spirits, but they've kept to the shadows, working quietly, discreetly. In the twenty-first century, they come out swinging.

Cultural Appropriation is a spirit that embodies the theft of culture. It's not as simple as using fireworks the Chinese invented at your house in Seattle. Cultural Appropriation takes something from a culture, then puts it on display in such a way that robs uniqueness from its people. For example, leprechauns are a staple of Celtic mythology. Yet, they've become silly stereotypes, used for advertising cheap products every year. They've been appropriated.

For the Weaver's purposes, it stagnates culture. It builds a widespread expectation of a culture, one its members must perpetuate if they wish to fit in with a dominant culture. Members of the appropriated culture must wade along with stereotypes, and accept typecasting and limited opportunity. This effectively seals creativity, while simultaneously keeping the culture alive on proverbial life support.

In one famous case, Cultural Appropriation influenced a pop star's entourage to use a specific dance associated with a minority group in a high-profile performance. Unfortunately for the Weaver, the effort was a massive failure, drawing too much attention from other nearby spirits of rage, arousal, and disgust. They slaughtered the Cultural Appropriation spirits involved.

Rage: 4, Willpower: 4, Gnosis: 4, Essence: 12

Charms: Cleanse the Blight, Illuminate, Peek, Spirit Static

Image: Cultural Appropriation spirits are a strange lot. They're melting pots of identifying, stereotypical cultural traits, creating an amalgam shape with a single eye in the center, and a single arm and hand which both moves the spirit, and allows it to manipulate the world around it.

Digital Game

Digital Game is at the forefront of the Weaver's PR efforts to raise modern children into slobbering, worshipers of the Pattern Web. While Digital Game runs the gamut of personalities, the bulk of its manifestations focus on hyper-masculine violence simulation, often couched in just enough irony to defray society's concerns of malicious intent.

Digital Game doesn't participate directly in the war for the Apocalypse; it prepares humanity to blindly and rabidly fight in its name. Its efforts have been a wild success in the past decade; Digital Game's sycophants will actively seek out detractors in far reaching corners of the world, and use their own, very human methods to bully, threaten, and denigrate critics into silence. This both makes Digital Game look innocent, and benefits from the true warriors using their own ideal tactics, not those directly taught by the spirit. Its

victims fight not with the guns and swords Digital Game glorifies, but with violent rhetoric and mob mentality.

Age: 8, **Willpower:** 2, **Gnosis:** 6, **Essence:** 16

Charms: Control Electrical Systems, Corruption (per the Wurm Charm), Solidify Reality

Image: Digital Game looks like any number of anthropomorphized entertainment concepts. Some are animals. Some are robots. Some are wizards. A popular form is a muscle-bound man with an enormous gun, sunglasses, and a cigar. They share one common trait, however. Their faces are mirror images. If you look into Digital Game, you see yourself staring back. Digital Game can communicate, but it's limited to saying things the listener has already heard. It cannot communicate new concepts. This makes it particularly dangerous to educated people, as it's better able to express complex ideas and manipulate them using their own biased knowledge.

Downtown Train

Downtown Train is a massive, benevolent Weaver manifestation. It exists to facilitate peaceful movement. It asks minimal, fair payment, but will carry large groups over significant distances.

Downtown can transport any number of smaller creatures through a Moon Bridge as if they were part of the train. Given the right incentive or persuasion, it can help a pack pursue a target rapidly. Downtown Train is patently against bullying and abuse, so the goal must at least appear noble for Downtown Train to take a stand. A pack abusing Downtown Train's nobility will find themselves with a powerful enemy.

Age: 4, **Willpower:** 10, **Gnosis:** 10, **Essence:** 45

Charms: Open Moon Bridge, Spirit Static, Swift Flight, Tracking

Image: Downtown Train is enormous. Just how enormous, it's hard to say. From any given spot along the train, you cannot see the end of it. To find its front or rear sections, you have to approach them specifically and intentionally from the outset, or you'll find yourself walking in perpetuity along the side. Downtown Train exists in deep, underground places and looks every bit a 1920s train, made of blackened steel, warmed with a soft, reddish glow.

Lenocinor

Lenocinor spirits embody the concept of buying the next new thing, over-consuming, and over-spending. The spirits thrive when people buy luxury goods and non-essentials. Many of the spirits attach themselves to specific advertisements, influencing people to spend money to feed them. They grow fatter each time someone makes a frivolous purchase, and therefore take a vested interest in ensuring product placement and advertisement reaches the most people.

In 2013, a 30 second advertisement slot during the most viewed American television program in history cost companies an average of \$4 million. Each 30 second slot had a Lenocinor attached to it, just waiting to grow fat on the resultant purchases. Smaller Lenocinors infest billboards and radio advertisements. Some crafty Lenocinors attach themselves to companies that encourage purchasing through discounts, deals, and false advertising. The Lenocinors tend to take on the traits of their chosen medium, making them more likely to actually influence consumers, forcing them into making more purchases than they would without the spirit's presence.

The largest known Lenocinor is Madison Avenue, the spirit that embodies the concept of advertising in the United States. Madison Avenue formed in the early 1920s as the advertising industry took hold in the area. The spirit grew fat on the advertising agencies in the area, and the resultant consumerism they produced. In the past few decades, ad agencies have moved away from the original street, but Madison Avenue has grown so large as to have influence over all of New York, and it retains influence over agencies that have moved.

Age: 6, **Willpower:** 6, **Gnosis:** 8, **Essence:** 20

Charms: Peek

Image: In the physical realm, Lenocinors look like men in business suits carrying black leather briefcases. In the Umbra, the spirits take the form of small ads, "buy one get one free" flyers, or discount coupons.

Old Is New Again

Old Is New Again comes from a sense similar to nostalgia, felt by people without the experiences necessary to feel nostalgia for a thing. Twenty year olds wearing bellbottom jeans and talking the merits of the Doors? That's Old Is New Again.

Old Is New Again is something of a Weaver guerrilla. It isn't trying to calcify reality or grow the Pattern Web. Old Is New Again is trying to add value to old things, in order to keep them from the junkyard; thus keeping them out of the Wurm's tendrils, and leaving less room for Wyld expansion.

The spirit uses subtle manipulative tactics to achieve its ends. It convinces twenty-somethings to disassemble old watches and turn their parts into jewelry. It makes that jacket in the thrift shop look just a little more vibrant. It makes your grandpa's jacket clean, fresh, and sexy as it was in the 1960s when he met grandma. In some cases, it's been known to nudge and inspire pop stars to write affectionate songs about used clothing — but Old Is New Again's influence ended in that case when a nest of Cultural Appropriation spirits (see p.131) took over.

Age: 6, **Willpower:** 6, **Gnosis:** 8, **Essence:** 20

Charms: Blast, Illuminate, Shapeshift, Solidify Reality

Image: Old Is New Again looks like an iconic example of something long gone, something that probably never really existed as we remember it. A common example looks the part of a cowboy. Others include delighted, obedient 1950s housewives, benevolent industrialists, and incorruptible, white knight police officers.

Pervium

Perviums are a specialized kind of Net-Spider determined to move people through the pattern as fast as possible. They hide in the Umbra in the Computer Web, attaching themselves to highly trafficked websites, sites that engage in high volumes of data sharing such as torrent sites, and sites that allow video streaming. They grow fat on each data packet exchange — the larger the packet, the better.

When someone with broadband internet access visits one of the sites, the Pervium downloads itself to the computer, similar to a virus. Once there, it pushes the bandwidth of the user's signal, making it larger and capable of sucking down more data at once. Each download is a little faster, load times are shorter, and streaming is more precise. As the Pervium works, the user becomes more and more dependent on the Pervium's speed, and soon craves faster internet access. As the victim begins searching for ways to increase her internet speed, such as cleaning her system, applying open DNS server addresses, or making adjustments to her router, the Pervium doubles the internet speeds these adjustments would normally produce. The Perviums' ultimate goal is to download the user as one large data packet.

Glass Walkers are aware of the Perviums, but are unsure of their purpose or goals. They often bind them as fetishes to their own computers, creating mobile broadband connections with faster than normal speeds.

Age: 6, **Willpower:** 7, **Gnosis:** 8, **Essence:** 21

Charms: Calcify, Control Electrical Systems, Short Out, Solidify Reality

Image: When manifested, Perviums appear as normal men and women, dressed in khakis and a polo shirt lacking any specific logos. The Perviums found in the CyberRealm look like frequency waves of colored energy.

Polyteron

Polyterons are strange elusive spirits only found in the Deep Umbra, anchored to objects that occupy four or more dimensions within space. On Earth, any such object is nothing more than mathematical theory, but far within the Deep Umbra, the laws of reality on Earth do not apply. Such objects not only exist, but the spirits attached to them thrive and grow strong.

Polyterons keep themselves to the Deep Umbra as much as possible. They serve the Celestines and Incarnae found there, and rarely have reason to leave the realm.

Every once in a while, one of the spirits will travel to the Astral Umbra on an errand for a Celestine, or to converse with the mathematical concepts found there. Beyond the Astral, Polyterons do not cross the Membrane as it forces them to conform to Earth's reality. Despite the mathematical theories that describe such objects, the spirits cannot remain in their true form in the Middle Umbra or physical realm. The rigid laws of nature attempt to mold the extra dimensions into finite shapes, instead of the more fluid suggestions of the Deep Umbra.

Polyterons can be dangerous spirits to deal with. The spirits exist in time and space differently than Garou, and find the werewolves interesting. They do not take kindly to intruders in their homeland, and will capture a Garou for study if one stumbles into their realm. The dimensions of the spirit make fighting them difficult. Though Garou claws and teeth can rip the flesh of the spirit in the Umbra, they cannot damage all parts of the spirit, making it resistant to attacks. The attacks of the Polyterons are similarly different, as they do not claw at the flesh of a Garou, but instead the time of one, cutting away bits of his future and past as they strike. A Garou killed in this way simply falls to dust as his life force meets with timelessness and ceases to exist.

Age: 9, **Willpower:** 8, **Gnosis:** 8, **Essence:** 40

Charms: Blast, Shapeshift, Time Rend*

- **Time Rend:** The spirit attacks the very time and essence of its target, tearing away the past and the future with its strikes. The Storyteller spends two points of Essence and rolls to attack. Instead of dealing normal damage, the attack permanently reduces the target's Rage by one dot per Health Level that would be lost. Once the target has run out of Rage, the attack targets Gnosis, then finally Willpower. If the victim is completely depleted of all three of these Traits, he dies immediately.

Image: Polyterons normally appear as the objects they are anchored to, multifaceted constructs occupying dimensions in space and time beyond mortal imagining. They are capable of shifting their forms to appear as three dimensional objects, though only bother to do so when examining a caught Garou. They have learned from experience that exposure to their true forms drives a werewolf insane, making research impossible.

Silver Screen

The technology of the first moving pictures, and talkies fascinated people. Movies were an instant hit, drawing audiences and viewers of all ages across the world. The wild popularity caused Silver Screens to awaken in all major towns, and later in smaller towns.

Silver Screens started out as spirits invested in the hope and inspiration that film brought to audiences. The emotional high of watching a good film fed the spirits and they grew large from it. But, as some Weaver spirits

tend to do, they were not content to simply grow fat on the random emotions of viewers. Instead, they became attuned to specific types of films — including comedies, action, adventure, drama, or romance. The spirits started competing with each other, attempting to gather audiences for a specific film type over others they found inferior.

Eventually, the spirits resorted to influencing audiences into enjoying a specific kind of film. At some point, the Silver Screens stopped caring about joy and overall audience satisfaction, so much as the type of film. Silver Screens now care only about immediate emotional reactions. They grow fat as the audience reacts to tear jerking scenes, big explosions, and slapstick comedy. They don't care if the audience is satisfied with a film, as long as cinemagoers keep coming back to feed them later.

Silver Screens are not satisfied with natural audience reactions to movies. If everyone in an audience is not laughing, acting scared, or impressed at appropriate times, the Silver Screens become angry. They feel that people must follow the order and pattern set forth by the film, and force people to act as ideal audience members. The idea of the perfect audience goes beyond the cinema, and some Silver Screens have attached themselves to a person in an attempt to pattern his actions more like a film. The world around him becomes the audience for the movie that is his life.

Rage: 6, **Willpower:** 7, **Gnosis:** 8,
Essence: 21

Charms: Calcify, Coercion*,
Control Electrical Systems

- **Coercion:** The spirit influences the target's emotions, causing her to feel and react a certain way. The Storyteller rolls Gnosis (difficulty the target's Willpower). This Charm can be used across the Gauntlet.

Image: Silver Screens take on the form of movie characters when in the physical realm. While in the Umbra, they appear as a neat roll of film, communicating by revealing images to observers.

Skepticism

Skepticism reflects a powerful Weaver effort to build a religion around its accomplishments, teaching humans to blindly exalt the personalities behind scientific achievement. It's not a religion of creators and ingenious minds; it's a religion of celebrities that bring clever memes and pearly white smiles to science. It's about keeping the depths of science from the hands of the masses, and distracting them with talking heads. It's a modern embodiment of the Great Man Theory, and it's been remarkably successful.

Skepticism latches on to specific personalities, exalting them and pushing them into the limelight. It uses its Charms to bolster those personalities, and help them build cults.

Skepticism uses a special version of the Aura of Confidence and Seizing the Edge Shadow Lord Gifts; it can use them on a human, but not itself. It spends a single point of Essence to activate both on a given target. It's worth noting that with these particular versions of these Gifts, their effects work over the Internet. With Aura of Confidence, their online interactions show no discernible weaknesses, no matter what they do or say. With Seizing the Edge, they win clear ties in online interactions.

Rage: 4, **Willpower:** 8, **Gnosis:** 10,
Essence: 22

Charms: Aura of Confidence and Seizing the Edge (Special; see W20 p. 188), Armor, Healing, Illuminate, Peek, Solidify Reality

Image: Skepticism looks like a well put-together man in a pristine lab coat with exaggerated features. His smile's just a little bigger than human. His eyes communicate a sense of wonder. He's inhuman enough to invoke the uncanny valley response in humans, but still impresses and awes.

Truck Guardian

Motor vehicles of all kinds fulfill the same roles that horses and oxen did centuries ago, so it is not surprising that they inspire similar feelings of respect and loving attention. They are more than a tool to be wielded and forgotten; they are a partner without which the driver cannot function in his day-to-day work. Urban and rural shapeshifters occasionally awaken the spirits of vehicles in order to strengthen their bond with these cherished allies. While economical compact cars and



luxury sedans have spirits that a Garou can awaken too, few vehicular spirits are as hard-working, practical, and devoted as the guardian spirit of a pickup truck.

Truck Guardians cherish their owners and trust them the way a skilled rider trusts his mount. Some Theurges speculate that as shapeshifters perceive Truck Guardians as humans, the spirits see their owners as their horses — to be guided and cared for but always respected and allowed the freedom to roam at will. A Truck Guardian regards any opportunity to haul cargo with the same enthusiasm that an Ahroun greets battle, and it grows restless if denied a chance to test its mettle regularly. Partially, this is because nothing makes the spirit feel more alive than carrying heavy burdens, but they also know that other Truck Guardians feel contempt for trucks who reach old age without earning the right to boast about their glorious cargoes. They also tend to snicker at other Truck Guardians whose owners are in some way inferior — physically weak, unfamiliar with the mechanical workings of their vehicle, or neglectful of the truck's maintenance.

While Truck Guardians accept that not all vehicles are like themselves, they feel naturally superior to all non-pickups. They regard sports cars as cowardly dandies, consider compact cars and luxury sedans beneath notice, and treat large family vehicles with disdain for sacrificing so much cargo space while demanding multiple riders. They revere construction, cargo trucks, and diesel rigs but tend to consider these massive vehicles a bit unstable and not suitable for polite company on account of their single-minded devotion to hauling. Truck Guardians live to haul and tow, but they also think it important to make time for the occasional light duty work of a tailgate party or drive across town.

Age: 9, **Willpower** 5, **Gnosis** 3, **Essence** 25

Charms: Armor, Gremlin*

- **Gremlin:** The spirit can choose to inhabit its truck self or its legal owner (or owners). The Storyteller spends one Essence and rolls Gnosis (difficulty equal to the owner's Willpower if unwilling, or 4 for the truck or a willing owner). This possession lasts the time indicated:

Successes	Duration
1	one turn
2	five turns
3	one minute
4	five minutes
5	one hour
6	three hours plus one hour per success above 6

If the spirit successfully possesses its truck self, it gains

control of all the vehicle's functions as if the truck were running. If the Truck Guardian successfully possesses its owner, it increases her Strength and Stamina by one and adds two dice to all her Athletics rolls. This bonus applies for as long as the Charm lasts. The spirit can allow its owner to act independently but can also seize control of her motor functions at any time if it wishes.

Image: Truck Guardians do not appear as vehicles in the Umbra. Rather, they look like archetypal barbarian warriors. They bear a superficial resemblance to the physical truck — scratches and dents manifest as scars, custom detailing appears as elaborate tattoos, bumper stickers and accessories appear as badges or trophies worn on the Truck Guardian's clothes or in its hair. Each one carries a large, heavy weapon strapped to its back — typically a battle axe or two-handed sword. A new truck's Guardian is a young warrior as yet untested in battle, while an aging model is a grey-haired warrior with wiry strength and bright, fearless eyes.

Wyld Spirits

Anonymous

Anonymous is a spirit of anonymous camaraderie; it represents purpose without context. It exists as pure momentum, moving from one goal to the next, washing over each and moving on without a second thought. Its power is in their randomness. Some of its targets are immense, far



away, or daunting. Sometimes, its targets are small, close by, and simple. Its targets rarely make sense at the time. But it tackles, eliminates, and jumps to the next quarry. However, it can never manifest — if forced to manifest, it immediately dies. It possesses the Manifest Charm; it just cannot use the Charm. Anonymous is technically of the Wyld; its wild, chaotic, random motion fits right in with the mad, creative part of the Triat. However, it's generally found deep within havens of the Weaver. It moves faster along pattern webs and other bastions of complex human civilization.

Creative Garou can sometimes influence Anonymous by finding subtle clues and patterns in Anonymous' choice of targets, and emphasizing those features. But every cell of Anonymous is different, so the Garou must watch and learn those patterns for any given spirit.

Rage: 8, **Wisdom:** 5, **Gnosis:** 7, **Essence:** 20

Charms: Blast, Short Out

Image: Anonymous presents as a legion of faceless white humanoid figures. The figures are each lanky and sickly, with dozens of long, slender digits. It moves in a wave formation, rushing forward, up, and outward rapidly. The humanoids trip and tumble over each other, scrambling hungrily like zombies toward their quarry. Their Blast Charm represents the mass of bodies ripping and tearing at the target.

Beleben

Beleben is one of the Wyld's children, awakened as people began to use the extracts from plants such as coffee and tea more than the plants themselves. Belebens are high strung, fast moving and erratic spirits. They enjoy a fast paced life and attach themselves to places with people who are constantly moving. They work to inspire people to be alert, aware, and to do creative things.

Belebens awaken in places devoted to natural stimulant use. In coffee shops and cafés all across the world, Belebens grow fat from people drinking caffeinated beverages and being on the go. Belebens move fast, flitting from person to person inspiring them to creative endeavors. Belebens inspirations tend to linger with people, giving them time afterward to really explore and develop ideas conceived under Beleben's influence. Some Belebens attach themselves to a person's home, watching tea bags, small pills, and percolator with rapt attention, just waiting for the person to imbibe the caffeine.

People do not need to ingest caffeine to be inspired by a Beleben, but few of the spirits would bother with a person unless he is showing proper worship by drinking a caffeinated beverage, or eating a caffeinated food or pill. Garou often ask Belebens for assistance when they need to be extra alert, or need to get something done quickly. Often the only chiminage a Beleben accepts is proper worship through ingestion.

Rage: 6, **Willpower:** 4, **Gnosis:** 8, **Essence:** 18

Charms: Healing, Open Moon Bridge, Inspire*

- **Inspire:** The spirit can use this Charm to increase the chance of success of an action, lowering the difficulty of the action by 1. The Storyteller rolls the spirit's Gnosis (difficulty 6). A spirit can only use this Charm once per scene per target.

Image: When manifested, Belebens are invisible to the naked eye, though the aroma of freshly roasted coffee beans or freshly brewed tea fills the senses. In the Umbra, Belebens take on the shape of the plant their stimulants are derived from, such as the coffee plant, various tea bushes, or a guarana. The image of the plant is faded and reduced to not much more than dry leaves and twigs, or dried out beans.

Chirurgion

Chirurgions are a new manifestation of the Wyld, born from advances in health care and medical science. These spirits are not derived from medical technologies — instead they come from medical chaos, and the spontaneity of medical research and new ways to grow.

Chirurgions appear in places where people perform any type of surgical procedure to graft, transplant, or otherwise add body parts onto an organism. Chirurgions may appear in surgical suites used by doctors renowned for daring reconstructive surgeries or in research labs where scientists are growing human body parts on animal vectors.

Once the Chirurgions awaken, they immediately get to work on their own agenda — creating new life. They use the modern medical techniques that awoke them to stitch pieces of unrelated creatures and spirits together to create new creatures and new spirits. They use whatever they find around them, and grow stronger with each successful life altering surgery.

Most Chirurgions are incapable of splicing life together from much more complex organisms than plants and bacteria. Some have started creating new spirits by stripping down parts of other spirits and splicing them together. The newly awakened spirit is purely of the Wyld, not representing anything in particular except the unchecked chaos of creation. These small spirits require new creations to survive, and rarely grow beyond Gafflings, though they do try to seed chaos around them as much as possible while awake. These spirits are also classified as Chirurgions, though they bear little resemblance to the spirits that created them.

Rage: 6, **Willpower:** 6, **Gnosis:** 8, **Essence:** 20

Charms: Cleanse the Blight, Healing, Tracking

Image: Chirurgions in the physical realm appear as figures in long white lab coats, their faces hidden behind a dust mask and goggles. They wear thick latex surgical gloves, and hair caps, as though they are ready for surgery. In

the Umbra, Chirurgeons appear as chimeras of many different animals and creatures.

Creepypasta

Creepypasta is a Wyld spirit fueled by the spontaneous, viral urban legends disseminated across the Internet. It's a fiery, energetic thing caused by fleeting bouts of enthusiasm and fright.

It's a spirit perpetually grasping for straws, struggling to stay alive. Every day it exists, it loses a point of Essence. It can only gain Essence through application of its True Fear Charm. When it uses the Charm successfully on a new subject, it gains a point of Essence, and it creates a clone of itself with a single point of Essence. Its modified version of True Fear will never work on the same character twice. This limitation applies to the clones as well; Creepypasta's True Fear will only ever work on a victim once.

Rage: 7, **Willpower:** 1, **Gnosis:** 4, **Essence:** 12

Charms: Disorient, True Fear (as the Ahroun Gift, W20 p. 171, use its Rage to activate)

Image: Each Creepypasta looks different; every example takes the appearance of a different urban legend. Some look the part of tall, slender, nondescript men with shadowy tendrils. Some look the part of vinyl blowup dolls. Some look like terrifying clowns. Some like little drowned girls covered in television static. Their existence, and their particular application of True Fear caters to the story that inspired them.

Farm-to-Table

Farm-to-Table is something of a compromise on behalf of the Wyld, to keep up with the times. Usually, Wyld spirits are born, exist, and die without much in the way of direction. They simply are. They act against their environments, and react to outside stimuli. That's the extent of their purpose. The Wyld thrives through that randomness. Despite its edge in randomness, the Wyld has not done as well these past few years. Farm-to-Table looks like an experiment for the Wyld. The Wyld corrupted numerous

Weaver spirits associating with food supply chains. The idea is to re-introduce more organic, locally raised foods to local economies, in order to fight back the Wurm and the Weaver on a subtler, less directly dangerous level.

Fortunately for the Wyld, it largely affects a generally privileged and influential class. Pentex still funnels deeply processed, genetically-modified toxins to the vast majority of the population. If the Wyld intends on expanding its Farm-to-Table forces, it'll need to branch out and use its influence to subsidize programs to bring clean food to heavily urban areas. Unfortunately, education is an uphill battle for the Wyld. Some Farm-to-Table Gafflings have taken to hunting weaker GMO spirits. Only time will tell which side comes out on top.

Rage: 6, **Willpower:** 6, **Gnosis:** 8, **Essence:** 20

Charms: Armor, Break Reality, Cleanse the Blight

Image: Farm-to-Table manifests as a carpet of grains that blow about, whipping up little whirlwinds of oats, barley, and other live foodstuffs. It communicates mostly through smells and subtle sounds; it only indirectly influences and inspires people toward desired behaviors. The smells of fresh honey tempt well, though.

GMO

As the Weaver gains power over the world, edging out the Wyld faster and faster each year, the Wyld must adapt, forcing change where he can. GMOs are spirits of the Wyld, created to cause chaos and change beneath the Weaver's notice. The GMOs are a cunning group of spirits, designed to trick the Weaver into creating vectors the spirits can use to create chaos. These subtle spirits seek to hurry the genetic progression of nature for good or for ill, in hopes to give the Wyld an edge.

The GMOs create change via chaos, often causing more harm than good just for the sake of change. The spirits are not placid plant spirits watching over crops as they grow. Instead, these spirits are foot-soldiers in the Wyld's losing battle. GMOs gain power whenever



organisms are genetically modified — the more mutations within a single organism, the better.

The true purpose of the GMOs is to induce spontaneous mutations in crops and plants leading to wild uninterrupted growth and change. The spirits create winds to carry genetically altered seeds to unmodified plants, they induce crosspollination between species and varieties, and even nourish plants with harmful mutations in hopes that the new species will create even more change as they grow. They influence insects to feast on GMO crops, knowing that the insects will also begin to adapt and change. They tend to GMO bacteria released into the ocean, keeping them safe from cleanup procedures intended to destroy them.

Most GMOs are still in the early stages of spiritual development, mostly Gafflings, with very few Jagglings. As production and use of genetically modified organisms increases, the GMOs have more chances of creating the havoc they need to thrive, allowing them to grow larger.

Age: 5, **Willpower:** 6, **Gnosis:** 7, **Essence:** 18

Charms: Armor, Cleanse the Blight, Create Winds, Healing, Open Moon Bridge

Image: When materialized, GMOs look like children with a mischievous gleam in their bright eyes. They are often covered in dirt, laughing and giggling as they dart about creating chaos and change. In the Umbra, the spirits appear as a swirling mass of color and light shining bright, though confusing to look at.

Made-Me-Do-It Devil

Made-Me-Do-It Devils are trickster spirits that encourage children, adolescents, and immature adults to engage in acts of mischief and petty rebellion. Some Theurges speculate these beings are related to the Fair Folk — a breed of Unseelie fae who love performing pranks by proxy. These Wyld-born spirits are not malevolent. They seldom encourage their young accomplices to engage in crimes more serious than petty theft, vandalism, and crank calls, but these minor offenses frequently carry serious, unexpected consequences. A kid who pulls a fire alarm wouldn't ordinarily provoke a deadly stampede, but the prank might turn fatal if a Bane uses the confusion to whip the crowd into a panic. A truant who calls in a bomb threat might direct the attention of the local bomb squad away from the explosives ready to detonate just across town. Servants of the Wyrms exploit

the Made-Me-Do-It Devils' pranks when they can, even if the spirits are not allies. What's more, the young people who do the Made-Me-Do-It Devil's dirty work regularly will eventually run afoul of the law. This puts them on a collision course with elements of society that *are* likely to lead them into associations with monsters — whether human or supernatural in origin. Ragabash occasionally treat with Made-Me-Do-It Devils, offering their services as pranksters exchange for the spirit's help — or just to convince the trickster to stop goading its current favorite accomplice into further acts of mischief.

Age: 3, **Willpower:** 5, **Gnosis:** 7, **Essence:** 15

Charms: Corruption, Healing, Peek, Secure Permission*, Shapeshift, Shatter Glass, Short Out

- **Secure Permission:** Whenever the Made-Me-Do-It-Devil makes a request of an authority figure (police officer, teacher, parent, boss, etc.), the Storyteller rolls the spirit's Gnosis (Difficulty is the victim's Willpower). If this succeeds the target gives the spirit whatever it asks for until the end of the scene as long as it doesn't immediately endanger anyone. Made-Me-Do-It Devils use this Charm to get their accomplices out of trouble or to reward them for especially imaginative pranks.

Image: Made-Me-Do-It Devils almost always manifest either as the target's favorite toy or as a roguish but charismatic new kid who takes a shine to her. Occasionally the spirit will not materialize at all, instead taking the role of the invisible friend who whispers suggestions from the other side of the Gauntlet. In the Umbra, Made-Me-Do-It Devils look like the observer did as a teenager. Even lupus and metis see them as what they would have looked like as human teenagers.

Stood Ground

Many recent high-profile news items have included homicide cases billed as "self-defense." These cases predominantly feature minority groups as victims, and questionable circumstances at best. Complexities in legal systems, racial and gender-based prejudices, and bureaucratic convenience have led to many cases not even ending with a verdict. The outrage caused by this phenomenon causes surprisingly little violence. But the pent-up aggression can sometimes lead to Stood Ground spirits. Stood Ground is a Wyld manifestation; it exists as an outward, reactive energy. Not infectious. Not corrupt. Just more energy than it can fit in a small space. Stood Ground is raw dynamism.



Stood Ground feeds on rage, frustration, and all the very human things that often foster Wyrmspirits. It's very territorial, and often fights off Wyrmspirits in its area. More than a few have been corrupted after such confrontations.

Rage: 14, **Willpower:** 6, **Gnosis:** 8, **Essence:** 28

Charms: Armor, Blast, Disorient, Shatter Glass

Image: Stood Ground spirits look like young, trim people, nondescript in casual clothing. Jeans, hooded sweat-shirts, sports jackets, ballcaps, always things to obscure features. Each bears the mark of numerous fatal wounds, from gunshots, to extensive external hemorrhaging. When provoked, they scream with the sound of thousands of voices, which is the vehicle for their Blast, Disorient, and Shatter Glass Charms.

Superhero

Comic books have featured superheroes for most of a century, and artistic renderings of classic larger-than-life heroes like Hercules and Theseus have inspired children for millennia. The idea of a courageous, muscular figure who rescues innocent people from villains and cataclysms is nothing new, and sometimes those idealized visions manifest as a spirit. Such beings seldom realize they are spirits. They manifest in the material world when they hear a plea for help strong enough to penetrate the Gauntlet. They rescue the innocent and dematerialize as soon as they are satisfied that they have saved the day. Superheroes' Charms vary considerably, but these spirits are not as invulnerable as they act. They fling their power around in flashy displays until they achieve their goals or fall into slumber trying.

Rage: 8, **Willpower:** 6, **Gnosis:** 4, **Essence:** 18

Charms: Peek, two or three other Charms that mimic the powers of the a specific character, such as Armor, Blast, etc.

Image: Each Superhero looks and acts like the character that inspired it.

Urban Art

Urban Art is one of the Wyld's most prolific elements in modern cities. It's a spirit of raw, creative energy, of wild rebellion, and of passion for one's home. Urban Art expresses pain, anguish, passion, and love in a way that allows urban youth a powerful voice. It sends messages seen by people of every social and economic class. Perhaps

more importantly to the Wyld, it lets artists create new language out of nothing.

The Urban Art spirit is a muse and a protector. It inspires artists, and it maintains their work, helping to fight back against cleaning efforts.

Rage: 8, **Willpower:** 8, **Gnosis:** 4, **Essence:** 20

Charms: Break Reality, Cleanse the Blight, Disorient, Peek

Image: Urban Art changes constantly. It looks like spray-painted figures that mutate, warp, and shift. Sometimes they're stenciled police officers spraying teargas, sometimes they're gang signs, sometimes they're crudely-drawn penises, sometimes they're stylized words. They never maintain a shape for more than a minute at a time.

You-Only-Live-Once

You-Only-Live-Once spirits represent youthful energy and a danger seeking behavior. These spirits are unpredictable and erratic, valuing daring escapades and life threatening antics. They gain power by encouraging people to act with abandon.

You-Only-Live-Once spirits find that young adults and teenagers are more susceptible to their influence than anyone else. Many of the spirits attach themselves to schools, parks, malls, and any other locations where young people gather together in groups. The spirits send gentle urging to the teenagers, prodding them into antics, pressuring them to outdo their peers. The concept of only living once and doing things while in the moment is not a new one, but with the ability to share stories and antics over the world through the internet, these spirits have grown in size and numbers.

The erratic nature of You-Only-Live-Once spirits ensures that they will do all sorts of things to inspire acts of daring, up to and including causing otherwise well-adjusted young people to engage in dangerous activities. Sometimes their antics can be so dangerous they end up hurting someone, though that is never their intent.

Rage: 6, **Willpower:** 4, **Gnosis:** 5, **Essence:** 15

Charms: Coercion, Create Fires, Peek

Image: In the physical realm, the You-Only-Live-Once spirits look like young boys wearing jeans and polo shirts with the collars popped up. In the Umbra, the spirits resemble cascading water, falling, rippling, and are ever shifting.



Chapter Five: The Chosen

Some of the rarest creatures in the World of Darkness, the Kami are the chosen of Gaia — infused with Her power in a blissful union that shows what the possessed should be. The Wyrms' fomori and the Weavers' drones are but shallow reflections of those creatures and places that Gaia infuses with Her power. She doesn't do it often, as bestowing Her power is draining, but She still has avatars in the world. Garou scholars speculate that Gaia wants to show Her love in a direct, personal way.

Those Selected By Hand

In 2005 a package was delivered to a Silent Strider Tribal Moot in Canaan, Tobago. The package had no return address and the man who delivered it vanished as soon as the package was in Garou hands. Inside, there was no more helpful explanation, no cover letter or note explaining the contents. Instead, the package contained a collection of notes and letters written in at least twenty nine different human languages. One page contained a series of glyphs that has yet to be transcribed, though most of the rest of the package has been translated. All of the

documents contained references to 'Kami' though depending on the language, the phonetic translation varied slightly.

What follows is excerpts from those letters and notes, or at least, what can be translated or made sense of. Many of the letters were simply mad ramblings or apparent nonsense. A children's poem in Japanese has been eliminated as it is assumed that was in and among the others by accident, though that may not have been the wisest course.

Since the initial incident, some of the pages have gone missing, or else been sent out to agents and septs all over the world in the hopes that the Garou Nation can get a better grasp on what the package is meant to communicate. Since then, the Silent Striders have passed several memos and letters they have to the other tribes. In an attempt to shuffle the hard work to peons, or challenge, many of these documents have wound up in the hands of young Garou. While the scope of these documents is unknown by and large, the quest to find and understand Kami is no longer a secret for the most elite or well traveled.

This section contains excerpts from the Canaan Documents. The Storyteller can use these excerpts as instant plot hooks to make the characters aware of the existence of Kami. Players can use these excerpts as part of a character's background to add motivation and anchor them

in the world of Gaia's chosen children. In addition, each excerpt has several ready-to-use or ready-to-modify plot hooks for the Storyteller to use or bounce off. Everything in this chapter is fair game. Nothing is distant theory, and everything is something Garou can run into.

Kami and the Wolf

You have to ask yourself first, why wolves? Right? Why wolves as warriors instead of elephants or lions or something? I mean, I know that there are other changers out there, and I know that wolves used to be all over, but so are cats and cats can be pretty fierce when you get right down to it. So why us? Why not humans, say? Humans with, I don't know, war spirits in them? That'd make for a pretty nifty warrior class wouldn't it?

See here's how I see it. I think maybe there was like, one wolf spirit, maybe two, that Gaia joined with a human host to be her warriors. That was all She needed at the time. Same with all the other weirdoes that you find all over the world. One or two crows, right? Gaia gives them Her blessings, then things get out of hand. Our job is bigger than any one of us can do, so we breed, and we change generation by generation as we make more and more of us. 13 tribes? Yeah maybe. But those first wolves, they had to come from somewhere.

Look, I'm not saying that tree on 5th Street is going to be one of us some day, that would be weird, but maybe we aren't so different. Maybe the lines between who really matters to Gaia and our grand Garou Nation aren't so thick. Maybe if we'd done whatever our job was right the first time, the first generation, we wouldn't exist at all.

Wait, wait, before you kick me out, hear me out. What do we know about them? The Kami? Pretty much nothing. On the surface, they're not all that different from, say, a fomori. They're people, places, animals, sometimes even just ideas that somehow get full of magical Gaia juice and can suddenly do all sorts of things you and I can't. They aren't a merger of spirit and flesh, because there wasn't really anything particularly spiritual about them before Gaia got involved. They were just people, or salamanders, or rocks, or the concept of the North Wind.

So Gaia gives them a job to do and some magical powers and bam, you got a thing as old as us. I know, the Japanese name, right? But it turns out that's just coincidence, turns out it's an older word that just has the same syllables. It's got a job like us. It's got powers like us but different just like other kinds of changers. The only difference is they don't change shape. But then again, you look at Cro-Magnon and they don't look anything like people and can't drive cars or anything. Maybe changing is an evolutionary trait. Could you imagine that? Gaia's doing these endless evolutionary experiments, starting new species and setting them on the ground to see what runs the long race? Wish I had a long enough view to see what's coming next, after us.

—The final words of Jin Shei before her banishment.

THE FIRST CHANGING BREEDS?

Are Kami really proto-Changing Breeds? Did all werewolves and other Changing Breeds start as Kami? Maybe. Will any Kami become new breeds of shapeshifters? It is a possibility.

Gaia is a creative force, constantly making and remaking life in new ways, and guides Her children to change and grow in ways to make survival most likely. Life must endure, and if that means creating a new breed of changers to take on a grand purpose, that is exactly what she will do. If the Kami and Changing Breeds are connected, the difference is that Gaia has granted Changing Breeds more free will. The ability to change shape may come with an ability to change their purpose and their destiny. This is a thing not afforded the Kami. Not yet, anyway.

To put it simply, Kami are things embedded with the essence and glory of Gaia herself. While She may not appear and communicate Her wishes directly, upon its creation the Kami knows what it needs to do. It may not understand how its purpose fits into a grander scheme, and most often, the Kami doesn't care. They can be people, animals, and even the land itself may serve Gaia in this way. Kami are not spirits joined to a host for a purpose, but rather, a host imbued with the spirit of Gaia herself.

- A former lover of one of the characters, a human, has come back into the character's life. He still has strong feelings for the character, but he also has a secret. He has been charged by Gaia to have a child with a Garou for reasons only Gaia can understand. To complicate matters, he isn't Kinfolk and certainly isn't supposed to know about the Garou. The character broke the Litany with him years ago, but it was simply a loose end never handled.

- An enemy of the pack — and of Gaia — has taken refuge in an abandoned botanical garden while on the run. When the pack gives chase, they are pushed back by unknown sources. If they push harder, the Kami that is the garden commands the Garou to leave. The garden is a place of peace, it insists, and it will permit no violence inside its boundaries. If the characters enter pursuing their foes, they might not be able to avoid a fight. Will the characters wait it out, or find a way to take down their foe without violence? And how will they convince the suspicious Kami that they even can?



• An elephant at the city zoo has started talking, and has been asking for the characters by name. It demands their presence in the way a lord would call on vassals. If they don't go, he will break out of the zoo and find them. If they go to him, he will command them with the same air of authority. "Take me from here," it tells them. "By Gaia's blessed bosom, I command you, take me from here and return me home." From there, the elephant will demonstrate both Gaia's blessing and his power. The characters had best return him to his nation. He can back up his implied threats.

Created for a Task

It has us pinned down, and what can I do but write this and pray that something carries it to someone who can help before it's too late.

When San-chan first noticed the island within a boat's row from our territory, she claimed it as ours. I knew nothing good could come of it. Maybe we do live in a land of six thousand islands, but when one appears one day out of the mist and out of the rain, it must be something more than just an

undiscovered island. Still, she insisted. We hunt and fish here, and so it must be ours as well. So we rowed out to see what the land was like, and what the fishing was like. Something expelled us. The sand and stones groaned under our feet and whistled curses at us, forbidding us from the sacred place. The wind made our skin bleed as if we were human. San-chan said this place was hers by rights given to her by Gaia, and the island itself scoffed at us. It told us we had no place there, that this was a place of refuge for the Amami thrush, and no other animal life was welcome. A pine forest rose up around us, like on the Nansei islands further from us.

We heard birds singing cheerfully at us as the wind and rain drove us back to our boats and San-chan howled in anger at her failure.

For six nights, we would find San-chan whistling the thrushes' cheerful song and pacing the beach, looking out at the inexplicable island.

We tried, myself and Ibis of the East. We reached out to the Island. We slipped the Gauntlet, but it wasn't a spirit. Not exactly, though many spirits had come to take refuge with their mortal bird kin on the flesh side. The island said little. Only that it was a sacred place created by Gaia to protect the Amami, and that is what it would do if it had to grow legs and feet with which to crush intruders into dust.

I believed it could.

Ibis was less convinced and told San-chan that it must be some kind of Wyrmlie. He insisted something sinister was going on there since he had never heard of a living island, and certainly no rocks and sands could be chosen by Gaia above us, her warriors.

Sadly, San-chan agreed, and we went to war.

None of the tricks I have for taming and controlling sprits worked, because this was simply not a spirit.

I told San-chan, and she told me to shut up. The bleeding on her arms from our first visit had never stopped, I told her this was a portent, she beat me to the ground. It was like her eyes weren't her own.

At the next assault, we lost Hanna, slain by branches from a tree she was climbing. San-chan ordered to her destroy birds' nests. The island destroyed her instead.

The time after that, I saw Hanna among the trees, tending eggs and bringing worms to young birds. Having seen her ghost pressed into service the rest of the pack needed no further convincing that the island was of the Wyrmlie.

I tried to tell them.

Instead, we row off to the island again to claim it, says San-chan. We will not survive, I think, but I hope that someone will get this letter and come to make amends to the island for our actions. And maybe reclaim or remains.

When Gaia creates a Kami, it is never by mistake or whim. She creates all Kami with a purpose in mind, and that purpose may be small or cosmic depending on the scope

of Gaia's need. Perhaps, for reasons only She understands, there is a spring, a drip really, on the side of a mountain in a national park that She wants stopped up. The Kami birthed from that need exists only so long as it takes to stop up the drip. If instead, the spring needed protection beyond even the Apocalypse, until the heat-death of the sun, She would create a Kami that is essentially immortal and potentially impossible to destroy for the task. Gaia's blessings for the Kami are so specific and direct that they can be a real difficulty for Garou who run in conflict with the Kami. The Wyrmlie and Weaver resent these special creatures, and even the spirits of the Wyld may occasionally get jealous of the Kami and try to interfere with their purpose. Or push the Garou in between the Kami and its purpose.

- The above letter reaches members of the pack, begging them to fix what San-chan's fallen pack made wrong. Approaching the island could be perilous, and so they must find some other way to appease the island and convince it to return the bodies of the fallen Garou and free the ghosts pressed into service there? What will they do when they discover the maddened survivor of the pack trying to rouse other Garou to strike at the island again?

- A cat, small and beautiful, with delicate markings that appear to be glyphs, comes to the pack. She is in trouble. She needs to kill a family of humans but she is incapable of doing so on her own because she is small. In truth, her purpose is to end a family line that has long been tied to the Wyrmlie and furthering the Wyrmlie's ends. They must not have any more generations. The cat, because it is a cat, has sought out the simplest solution, which is to kill a bunch of humans. Will the Garou help her? Will they dig deep enough to understand the scope of the problem? Will they try to stop her and risk Gaia's wrath? Or will they simply not believe she is doing Gaia's work?

- The characters can't seem to avoid a man who lives in their territory. He's strong, well built, charming, and apparently perfectly normal. He just keeps turning up when things get hot for the pack. Once, they come across him at the site of a Garou taken down by unknown circumstances. Once, he actually helped the pack take down a Pattern Spider when things got out of hand. In truth, he's a Kami charged with protecting the balance of the Triat in this particular city. He is neutral to the Garou, the Wyrmlie, the Weaver. He's only seeking harmony and will use the gifts Gaia gave him to enforce her command. Does that make this strange man the ally or the enemy of the pack? Only time will tell.

Mother May I?

You have never seen a thing in all of creation as humble and gentle as the tree that grows on 5th Street. I'm an old man now, you understand, but I remember it before. When it was

THAT'S A WHOLE LOT OF RARE CREATURES

Kami are rare. And yet, this book presents a good number of specific and suggested Kami to use in your chronicle as well as rules for creating your own. If you were to use all of these special creatures, your game would suddenly feel pretty crowded with the special and strange. Now, that could be then focus of a chronicle, to be sure, but if you only want to use one or two Kami, you may decide that those are the only ones in your World of Darkness. Just because one Kami exists does not mean all Kami exist, and that's something you can bring up with the players to reinforce how rare these creatures are, even if your players have read this book.

planted it was a sickly thing, put down by road workers with all the care and compassion of a dump truck. They about threw the thing into the grassy median, and I didn't figure it'd last long.

It spent a time thin and spindly and just growing, and I wouldn't have thought a second thing about it but that for the city, it had a pretty spot. Sunlight hit the area so the grass around it was particularly green. In the spring and summer it had a lot of dandelion companions and I think a woman down the street threw some wild flower seeds in the sunny spot, because purple and blue wildflowers occasionally broke up the green and yellow. The median was wide enough across that in the winter, it didn't end up covered in black sludge instead of snow. Even naked of it's measly leaves and covered in snow, the twig-of-a-tree seemed picturesque. I watched a high school girl take her black and white camera to the spot in December while it was snowing to catch the natural beauty there in the middle of a busy city street.

Can a tree be happy? Can it be content with its life? Maybe.

When it survived about five years, I was surprised. And a touch heartbroken when a summer storm came and the tree was hit by lightning. It split the trunk and I figured the happy little tree was a goner.

But that didn't stop it. Life will win out, I guess. This little tree wanted to live. It wanted to keep on going and do whatever it was supposed to do. It had, I don't know, strength of character. The spindly little thing went right on growing, bent over by the break, like the tree was forever bowing respectfully. It thickened up in the years to follow, and things got strange. Pigeons and alley cats would gather around the tree in a circle. No one noticed, the animals would run if humans or Garou came too close. But I saw.

Sometimes I'd see squirrels and little finches sitting in the branches chittering and tweeting away like they're singing hymns. I started calling it Gaia's Littlest Cathedral at that point, though the Garou I pointed it out to laughed it off. Still, I feel a power there that can't be explained by the presence of a caern. That's not what's going on here and it's hard to explain.

Sometimes I know what the tree wants. Sometimes I know what the cats and dogs and squirrels are praying for. Sometimes I know the words to the hymns the finches are singing and I wish I could just go down there and join them. But I also know that this tree isn't here for me, or for people, or for the Garou. It's there to bring the praise of other living things to Gaia and give all those creeping critters a place to feel safe and revel in the glory of our Mother.

I've asked the boy, that when I die, they have my ashes spread in the median along 5th Street so I can join the Cathedral and the animals as they pray. I just hope the tree accepts my gesture. I think it will. It's that gentle.

—Mr. Vo, Kin of the Glasswalkers and Respected Guardian of 5th Street.

Kami come to it willingly. Unlike the possessed or fomori or any other of the strange beings that inhabit the cosmology of the Garou, no Kami goes unwillingly or unwittingly into service. Even Kami that grow out of creatures or things with no recognizable sentience make the choice to become Kami. If it is sentient or even quasi-sentient, then not only does it choose to become a Kami, it knows at the start what being a Kami means. The Kami-to-be must be gleeful and celebratory in its purpose as Gaia breathes a new life into it. Kami are never accidents, they have no resent or regret. While they may regret what their purpose occasionally forces them to do, they do not resent their purpose, their reason, or their position as Gaia's chosen.

- A tree grows in a city that acts as a vessel for Gaia's love, and channels it to and from the wild creatures that live in the city. It is not yet a Kami, the process takes a long time with non sentient creatures. It needs protection, though, and has made attempts to call for help. The tree needs to be sure it won't be uprooted and killed before it completes its process, and city planners have been talking about gentrifying the area and destroying the trees little space. Beyond its need to live 'for Gaia,' it can't really communicate any more complicated ideas. If the pack can protect the tree, or else save its life, they may be on the ground floor of the birth of a Kami, a rare and amazing experience. But, that's a pretty big 'if.'

- Raymond Terry has a special job to do, and a very special benefactor, the earth itself wants him to fulfill his role. What that role is, he isn't saying, but proof abounds that he is in fact Gaia's special child. Problem is, the Wyrms has its own ideas about Raymond's fate, and while it can't attack Raymond directly for some reason, it has decided to

put doubt in the man's heart. Bad luck follows Raymond like a cloud over his head, and his experiences are Jobian in their tragedy. A prophecy spirit visits the pack and gives them just a glimpse of Raymond's future. Can they get to him before he loses heart? And will they trust their instincts enough to help him become the Kami he is meant to be, even if they don't know what his purpose is? Is their faith in Gaia strong enough?

- Pete wants to become a Kami. He doesn't know the term exactly, but he's got it in his head he can somehow serve Gaia. Problem is, Pete is dead. In life, Pete was a bad man. He died with a Bane riding on him, but make no mistake, he wasn't some innocent victim in the whole thing and he knows it. Now he's a restless, angry, sorrowful ghost with incredible power at his disposal. He could turn into a real nightmare for the pack, could blame the whole thing on werewolves, but he doesn't want to become that kind of ghost. He wants redemption and has this crazy idea that he could, maybe, serve Gaia the way he served the Wyrms. He just doesn't exactly know how. He'll need to find a peace and purity inside of himself, and he won't leave the pack alone until they help him purify himself. This quest could take the pack and Pete all over the Umbra before it's completed. And Pete's sure as heck not going to make it easy.

A Place of Purity

When the Kin told us that many of the children kept going missing, we at first dismissed it as a problem for them to solve. The children always returned, you see, and so we felt there was no need to concern ourselves. Still, the Den Mother eventually got involved, beseeching on behalf of our Kin that we look into the strange behavior. All of the children between five and twelve would simply vanish for six to twelve hours and return dirty but unharmed save that they could not remember what they had done or where they had been. They were quiet though, calm and content in a way you rarely see from children of that age. We examined them and saw no spiritual harm to them. Quite the contrary, they seemed extraordinarily healthy. Even little Katin, a sickly child from birth, seemed robust and brimming with life. When we noticed her brother's twisted foot straighten out after one of these periods, we realized we had to look closer. No one was especially worried about the children, but these things don't just happen without an explanation.

We planned to track them, then, and waited. It took a while, but eventually we spotted some of the children leaving in the middle of the night. Spirits followed them, covering their tracks. They walked about twenty minutes, in the middle of the night, with no light and no concern as they moved deeper in the woods near the kin-home where they lived. We raise our children to be fearless, you understand, but this was something else entirely.

When they finally stopped deep in the wood, they gathered around what appeared to be a trash dump. This happened sometimes, small businesses would use old dirt roads and dump their problematic trash in the woods where no one would find it right away. I could see computer screens and large batteries, ancient server towers and other electronic detritus. I can imagine the sorts of things that were dripping out of those old machines into the soil.

The children seemed aware as well, because they were cleaning. Humming happily and carefully bagging the machines up for proper disposal. The older kids wore gloves to handle the toxic cases and batteries. The younger children brought buckets of water, which they sang to and prayed over, before cleansing the soil around with the water. It looked enough like a rite that I asked our Crescent Moon if such a thing were possible. She said it was happening, possible or not.

Something had drawn these children out here to clean the land, to purify it, and instinctively they seemed able to do just that. "The land here is powerful," our Crescent Moon told us, though she said it was only a feeling. "Something important is going to happen here."

We have decided not to interfere and let nature take its course, though we will be watching as events unfold.

The process of becoming a Kami can be an arduous one. It's time intensive, sometimes stretching to decades depending on the needs Gaia has set out for her chosen one. One of the most important parts of the process is for the would-be Kami to find a place of peace and purity. It's vital that she accepts her purpose for Gaia in a place uncluttered by the Triat's meddling, or even more mundane influence. "Place" is subjective here, of course. For many human-turned-Kami, that place is internal, and the noise or pollution they need to fight are greedy thoughts, anterior motivations, doubt, and unsettled pain or anger. The landscape of the mind is as important for a sentient Kami as a clean environment around a plant- or earth-Kami. Of course, Gaia has a way of nudging these things along. That nudging is exactly the sort of thing that can push a pack of characters into stories with Kami at the center.

- The fish of the East River are dying. It was never a particularly clean place to begin with, but to see this many fish dead all at once is troubling. Worse, all manner of life from the river floats dead on the surface. Something is going on in the river, and it isn't pretty. Fish spirits and cleansing spirits have gathered on the spiritual reflection of the river, but the spirits efforts are killing them off left and right. "Something beautiful is meant to be born here" the fish spirits moan. "You must stop whatever is killing the fish. Something beautiful and clean is meant to be here. Stop the corruption. Stop it or we will see it spread to all

the living things of the city, not just here where our miracle is about to happen.” The fish spirits will not elaborate much more, but they are awaiting the birth of a fish who will become a Kami. If river isn’t saved, it can’t be born, and the river spirits will have revenge.

- A Stargazer Kinfolk has been ‘called to Gaia’ for an inexplicable service with full blessings of the tribe’s elders. The problem is, nothing is happening. The events that should have taken place to mark her rebirth as a Kami, a mystical meteor shower and other miracles, simply haven’t happened. What the elders don’t realize is that this girl has a troubled history and it taints her dreams and memories. The pack may need to enter the girls dreams to help her come to terms with her past, and therefore let her find that place of peace.

- An old Southern graveyard is on the cusp of becoming a very special Kami. It’s no ordinary graveyard, however, as it was a place where the Klan buried lynched and murdered Civil Rights activists. It’s sort of a public secret and the grandchildren of those Klansmen still spread their evil generations later, though not so overtly. Soil does not have a moral center, or an understanding of human lifespans. The graveyard needs balance, and it needs the murderers brought to justice. Through dreams and impulses, it draws the pack in to right the wrong and give peace to those buried here and birth the Kami the land needs.

It Grows for Gaia

It is a mistake to assume that when a plant becomes a servant of Gaia it is happenstance or even simply convenience for the goddess. The tree was in the right place at the right time. That coral reef just grew where there was a need, and so the reef became the blessed creation.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Plants, same as animals and humans, seek out Gaia. They want, yearn, and need to serve. They come to Gaia in their own way with a desire to be and become more for She from whom all life comes. One could argue that their dedication is even more impressive since by and large plants are not sentient. So in order to serve Gaia they must give up the freedom of non-sentience, accept the burden of thought and worry, and take it on to themselves so that they may fulfill the need Gaia has for them.

It’s a sacrifice.

It’s also important to note here that we are not discussing the spirits of plants that seek out service. That would be a far less impressive sacrifice. This is not the spirit of a rose bush, but the bush itself. Kami are not a binding of spirit and flesh. They are flesh itself filled over with Gaia’s love.

The peculiarity that I have myself not yet worked through is what manner of accident and happenstance it is that so often Gaia has a purpose to fit Kami that cannot move. So often, she has a purpose, is it something She creates first, and the servant



comes, or is it servant who come first, and Gaia's need comes second? More likely, both happen simultaneously. That's the workings of the goddess.

Plant Kami are simple, straightforward beings that think and act only exactly as is necessary to their purpose. Some Kami were more used to freedom of thought and action before their creation, the plant Kami had no such difficulty. They grew and propagated and that was about it. Now, in service, they grow and propagate second to their purpose, but that's as far as most will go. Given time, centuries maybe, a plant Kami may learn traits like cooperation or enlightened self interest, but it's rare. Plant Kami aren't stupid. They simply don't bother to know or understand more than is necessary for their duty. If they can be convinced it's necessary to their purpose, they can be taught. They can grow to understand things outside of their task, but it usually takes external sources. Plant Kami are refreshingly free of conflict and internal struggle. Many of them resent sentience as it clouds their duty, but accept it as a necessary evil.

- A tree grows from a mountain side, and it has been crying. It sends a low, sad, mournful spiritual impression all through the valley next to the mountain. The animals in the valley have stopped procreating and feeding themselves. The birds won't clean themselves or sing anymore. The valley has become depressed along with the ancient tree. She has been a Kami in service to Gaia since this mountain was young, and she is tired. She has seen a million generations of rabbits come and go. She has even outlived the spirit friends she has made over the millennia. She is ready to rest now, but her purpose is not over. She blocks a cavern in the mountain that human feet must never cross. That is her purpose. And she is so very tired. While she mourns, the valley around her is dying of sadness.

- A King's Lomatia is a sort of bush, and maybe the longest living plant in creation. By cloning itself instead of reproducing, some examples have lived for more than forty thousand years. One such ancient plant is growing, in part, in an area near the pack's territory. Its purpose is complicated and hard to express to creatures that live and die in relatively brief flashes, and it literally lives in dozens of places at once with one mind. Pentex has taken part of the plant to a laboratory. It is in pain. It is in constant pain. It needs liberation, and if it must uproot and walk into the pack's territory to demand a rescue, it will do just that.

- The sounds of rabbits screaming in the middle of the night wakes the pack. Not one, but many, an entire warren of rabbits and a warren of their spirit fellows crying like they are trapped and terrified. They will not stop. If and when the pack goes to investigate, they find the source of the fear is not the rabbits. They are only a vehicle for expression. In fact, a sanicula has just become a Kami. The plant is a relative of the carrot, and this particular sanicula is here to feed the rabbits in the area for Gaia. It is terrified,

though, it has never thought before, and sentience terrifies it. Doubt. Pain. Awareness. The sense of mortality. The long-lived carrot is experiencing all of these things at once, and it will not release the rabbits from screaming until someone calms it.

It Creeps or Crawls, Swims or Flies

I know what you're thinking, and I'm always surprised when I come across this idea in humans. Fucking pets, right? What little fuzzy assholes. I don't know why anyone keeps them around! They shit everywhere, and they only love you so that you feed them.

Let me tell you, that is such complete bullshit I can't even GAH! You humans need better profanity for the amount that idea pisses me off.

Look, even before this whole thing, I was a creature of love. I lived in your house, instead of the wild, so I was basically a forever-kitten and there was pretty much nothing in the world I wanted to do more than just love you. I ate the food you gave me, but I never felt entitled to it. I was grateful and even surprised every time you put down my bowl. Didn't you hear that purring, you insensitive asshole? Was I standoffish sometimes? Not in the way you think I was. See, I was loving you, sure, but also sometimes I'd get distracted. I'd be thinking about food or your lap or that warm spot by the heater, and then all the sudden I'd be thinking about Gaia. I didn't know that word, or any word then really, but I would start thinking about the wonder of life and how good things are and I'd just know it came from a source. A source that I wanted to be a greater part of. Yeah, yeah, I know that sounds silly. But the thing is, it's legit. I know the whole thing was real, because well, I kept loving you and loving Her and then one day, I could really think about loving her. I had this reason for being beyond just loving you. I understood the world in a way I never had before.

So I still love you, you big stupid pink thing. A part of me will always love you. But I've got a reason, a thing I gotta do, and it'll make the world a better place. Not just for me or you, but for all of us. So, I'm sorry.

—A letter from your cat.

Animal Kami are maybe the easiest sorts of Kami to understand. They are at least in part aware, and yet not so withdrawn from the natural order that they miss the call from Gaia when it comes. Maybe when the family dog is staring out the window its just thinking about getting out and chasing chickens, or maybe it's thinking about Gaia. Maybe doves just sing to find mates, or maybe, sometimes, they sing for Her. Animals are the closest to Gaia of all aware creatures, right? After all, the Changing Breeds all come from animals, don't they?

- The javelinas have organized. Or rather, they have a leader now. And it seems like that leader is smarter than

your average Arizonan. They've killed two hunters by running them down. What will they do next? And is it really in service to Gaia?

- Whales, in general, are not aggressive. Off the coast of the city where the pack lives, locals report an unusually large whale running into fishing boats and capsizing them. It isn't all boats. Some werewolves have determined a pattern. Fish and sea life spirits have begun flooding to the area where the whale is hunting. It could cause an imbalance in the natural order due to over-fishing or pollution. What is the whale doing, and why? Can the characters intervene to maintain balance, or is the whale already acting on an imbalance the characters aren't aware of?

- No one in the pack is quite sure who the cat belonged to. Maybe none of the characters especially like cats, but they found this cat in their territory. One of them might feed it and pet it, since it's so rare to find a small animal that doesn't just run from Garou. Then it left a note, saying that it had a greater purpose and saying goodbye. Six months later, the cat has returned. It asked the Garou to take its picture and upload this pictures to a specific web forum. No sooner does the werewolf post one, the cat requests another picture on another site. Then another. She asks to have her picture taken all over the city, in various adorable or funny situations. Once she's had her picture uploaded to six different forums, the pack likely want to know the point of the whole affair? Is there a connection between the forums? And how does it connect to the string of suicides all across the city by various men in positions of power?

Gaia's Sanctified

She was beautiful, I mean, to me she was beautiful but no one was going to put her on any magazine covers. Objectively, she was a little lopsided. Her face wasn't symmetrical, and though she tried to disguise it, one of her breasts was noticeably bigger than the other. Something to do with breastfeeding she said, but I didn't press the matter because she was always so self-conscious. She was heavy, but she carried it well, and I always saw her more as taking up the space Gaia gave her than as fat. She kept herself well, except her hair, which was long and wild. She fed any child that came to her back door when she was baking or cooking. Some of the neighbors would complain, implying that poor children were like stray cats: if you fed them once, you'd never get rid of them.

Spirits of charity and giving and peace always hovered around the place, not that she was ever aware of them. She never seemed aware of any of it really. She'd just hum and cook and take in charity cases and give out whatever she could afford to give. She said 'everyone has a reason' without going into too much depth about what that meant. She just took it on faith that giving was what she was supposed to do. She didn't know about Gaia, not exactly, and she certainly didn't know that we

were a pack of werewolves. She was beautiful in that way too. She was outside of our world and not part of our struggle. Going to see her, to bring her food and money, it felt like nothing else mattered. We could lick our wounds and take a breath.

Jerri, our Alpha, seemed to think that this was her reason, that Gaia had made her to make us feel better. I never told Jerri how wrong I thought she was. Not until years after the Kami vanished.

—From the notebook of Chuck the Liar.

Unlike other sorts of Kami, human Kami have the unique ability to lie to themselves about what they are and what they can do. That's not to say that human Kami come to serve Gaia confused about what they do or that they somehow unwittingly fall into service. They understand their purpose with the same reverence as any other Kami. It's just that through culture and society, human Kami may have filters they use to better understand Gaia in a greater cultural context. An atheist might become a Kami if they were devoted enough to fulfilling their purpose. It wouldn't even make them wrong in their lack of belief, not exactly. Human Kami have no reason to know the details of Garou existence, or the greater workings of the Triat. While it's possible, in general, that human Kami just know what they have always known, others just know that what they are doing is the right thing at almost all times.

- A man who fell into a river but did not die, and now a church is growing up around him. He'd been trying to kill himself, according to his story, and the water would not take him. He had a greater purpose, so he says, and preaches about life and love and especially how people should not give up on life just because the world seems so rotten. The church is a rag-tag group of people pulled to this man's story, and he's attracting attention and threats to his life from less tolerant faiths. But to werewolves, he's clearly of Gaia. Are the characters willing to interfere in what could be a small religious war?

- Jerome is the middle of it, literally. He's a sensitive, thoughtful sort of guy who reads a lot about the world and humanity's place in it. He also works a high paying tech job in the middle of one of the most corrupt industries in the US. He hates his job but won't leave it because he believes, deeply, that he can make a difference from the inside. Becoming a Kami was subtle, slow, and he's unaware of what he is and what he can really do. He's been exchanging posts with one of the pack members on a spiritual-but-confused social justice subreddit, and he's strangely informed about the Garou nation without being obvious about it. If the characters want to find out why, they're going to have to liberate him from his 9 to 5 world and help him understand. The pack has to do it before he becomes corrupted by the industry in which he exists.

- Mannon Jedd knew about werewolves before he came to his duty. Actually, to be direct, he used to hunt werewolves

and kill them. At the time, it was a pretty legit, if dangerous thing to do — his hometown had been invaded by a pack of Black Spiral Dancers. He and some of his buddies fought back and actually managed to drive the Dancers out, killing more than one of them. In the process, they came across a boy going through his First Change because of the stress of the Dancers' assault. Mannon stopped his buddies from killing the kid, seeing him as innocent, and helped get him out of town to head back to his family in another town. Gaia watched this man and his sense of right and wrong, and eventually, she rewarded him. He moves around a lot, now, studying wolves and picking up orphans before the Wyrms take them in. He won't say how much he knows, or why, but he is unquestionably of a creature of Gaia.

Do Not Tread

This land is your land about as much as I'm your lapdog. And I'll rip your face off for kicks if I can get away with it.

Bottom line is, you roam far enough for long enough, by the Wyrms' crooked toenail you'll find out that you can't even trust the soil under your feet. Don't believe me? That's on you. Truth of it is, some places — some special sacred places — will rip you the fuck up if you trespass there. I don't care if you're the grand high wolf princess boy king. These places will chew you up and spit you out and shit your hat out without batting an eye. Because they don't have eyes. Because they're mountains or plains, not, you know, things with eyes.

Look! I know! I sound crazy. Years on the road'll do that. You don't have to believe me. Probably maybe you'll never run across one of these things. But if you do, you remember what I tell you. Don't matter if Gaia herself shows up to vouch for you, Her land gives exactly zero fucks who you are if you get in its way or mess up its mojo. The living land is of Gaia just like the Litany says, just more so. Violate at your peril, buddy. 'Course, not all sacred places are alive in Her service. Don't make that mistake and spend four hours yelling at a caern to see if it'll answer. Trust me on that.

—Mad Molly Green, elder of the Black Furies.

Land Kami follow a certain kind of logic, if you look at Gaia as a larger concept than just an earth mother goddess. The land, with its plants and animal life, exists as a harmonious whole and the power of creation itself can empower that whole. And that is, essentially what a land Kami is. It is a small ecosystem that is united under Gaia for a specific purpose. That purpose may be to protect the secret within, guard a sacred place, or some other duty even less easy for Garou to understand. It always has a purpose. Gaia could command a mountain to rise up and prove her existence and superiority in a heartbeat. She does not, because that is not her way.

- The trees of Woodsman Park are not separate entities, but share a root network and so the whole of the

park is essentially one symbiotic system. It is a place of safety, and peace flows from it to support the surrounding area, though only the park itself is a Kami. Animals come and go, water flows through streams, and a little bit of that peace spreads outside of the park. People, though, don't tend to leave. Any human that goes into the park is invited to stay. To join the peace and the quiet, and in fact, join the trees. And people are leaving the surrounding city to join the park. Not yet in droves, but it could happen. When the pack discovers this, what can they do, what should they do?

- Finding a new caern is rare enough, but to find one in conflicted territory between two rival septs seems like Gaia is laughing at her Chosen. Worse, the septs quickly discover that the land itself won't let them have ownership over the caern. The land can think and communicate and defend itself. It will not let war come to it, and it is slowly growing, spreading through the contested territory. Some claim that it is a message from Gaia, a demand for them to withdraw their teeth and be siblings. But not all share that faith. Some see it as wicked magic perpetrated by the rival sept, and as a declaration of war.

- Pelican Bay, a small inlet of water next to a fishing village, is returning the dead to their families. The bay itself has woken to Gaia's greater needs and, somehow, it is raising those men and women who died while fishing or otherwise in the water to life again and sending them back to shore. Some of these people have been dead for centuries or more. Including a great and powerful ancestor of the local sept.

Becoming Gaia's Gifted

When Gaia invests the time and effort it takes for her to make a Kami, She does so with a purpose in mind. That might be something as simple and tangible as protecting the last of an endangered species, or it might be a vast and unknowable calling only the greatest of Theurges has any chance to suss out, and only then through dream. Regardless of who or what She chooses, the process of becoming is a slow one.

Becoming Kami is quickest for Her animals, but the seasons it requires may take several cycles of reproduction before a mother rabbit bears a Kami kit. A human Kami might take a decade to come into her bloom, though that can be delayed or quickened depending upon the health of her environment. Plants take longer, though flora with short lifetimes may find the process extends their existence until the blessing takes. These vessels in particular must become sentient before sapient, and that is not a short journey. Kami of the land itself are the slowest of all to come into their power. Like plants, they

INTERRUPTIONS

Many forces benefit from preventing potential Kami from claiming their Gaia-given gift. The Weaver's unwitting servants in Developmental Neogenics Amalgamated have a geological division dedicated to exhuming what they call Aberrant Cradles — budding Kami of the soil. DNA believes them to be a possible source of the different strains of lycanthropy. The Wyrms are so enraged by the existence of Gaia's chosen that it blesses animal fomori with a knack for finding and devouring proto-Kami. Even the Wyld's unpredictable agents can grow jealous of Kami they smell flowering. Gorgons have been known to end the threat to their sovereignty over the natural places.

What's more, preventing a Kami from reaching its potential leaves a great deal of spiritual energy unspent. Human, animal and plant Kami who perish before their transformation are worth between 1 and 5 Gnosis when consumed, depending on how powerful Gaia intended them to be.

have an arduous and winding path before they manifest thought. It takes so much of their being to infuse with Her nourishing breath that upward of a century can pass before a Kami of soil and stone flowers with Gaia's offered might.

Shortcuts to becoming Kami don't exist per se, but certain energies can speed things along. Rare as they are, the presence of other Kami can help bring a nascent Kami to bud. Likewise, proximity to caerns, shapeshifters and thin spots in the Gauntlet will shave years off the welcome chrysalis.

Regardless of the kind of Kami, they need to seek a place of purity — or be one, as the case may be — for that final epiphany that brings them into their power. It must be awash in Gaia's essence, though the location is otherwise unimportant. When a new Kami first steps into her role, brief, localized miracles herald the event. Absurd fertility among nearby plants and animals, diseases evaporating from the bodies of the ill, predators lying down with prey — events that the enemies of Gaia are unlikely to miss.

The Kami don't have breeds or families like the fomori, with whom the Kami share little more than the act of transformation. Each Kami is an individual of Gaia's own choosing. A special person, place or thing, both hale

and pure, who knowingly accepts their new burden, even if they don't entirely understand it. The closest thing to a Kami family are the Rorqual: massive and extremely rare whale Kami that serve as migrating caerns of the Rokea.

The Geasa

Being Kami isn't a free ticket to spiritual power. They may not be suited for the front lines in the war against the Wyrms, nor do they have the infrastructure of the Garou Nation to rely on, but the Kami are far from helpless. Even a gentle blessing comes with a price. That price is a promise.

The purpose of every single Kami can be boiled down to a contract they've made with the Earth itself. Whether this is a task or a role, simple or complicated, active or passive, this new drive defines them. To that end, each Kami has a restriction they cannot disobey; a taboo that would cost them much of their spiritual blessing to break. In the case of Kami who aren't self-aware without their blessing, breaking their Geasa could result in loss of one of Gaia's chosen. These Geasa can be anything from simple prohibitions like *never eat what you had no hand in preparing* and *travel only the means Gaia gave you* to dedicated roles like *prevent the opening of new shipyards* that require more active intervention.

When a Kami breaks her taboo, she loses access to one or more of her Kami powers, depending on the severity of the breach. Communing with Gaia sometimes helps, though most often correcting the mistake is the only means of absolution.

Kami Creation

Few Kami exist in the world, particularly compared to the fomori. The Kami that do exist are spread across a wide variation of species, plants and landscapes. Should a Storyteller want to create a Kami as a character, or even run a story where the players take the role of Kami, the systems presented here provide a starting point. When it comes to defining Storyteller characters, these systems can make things easier, but don't feel restrained by the traits given here.

Human Skin

Create human Kami like any other human, then give them Gaia's blessing.

1) Prioritize three categories of Attributes: Physical, Social and Mental. Put six dots into the primary category, four in the second and three in the tertiary. Note that each Attribute starts with one dot.

2) Prioritize three categories of Abilities: Talents, Skills, and Knowledges. Assign eleven dots in the primary category, seven in the secondary, and three in the tertiary.

3) Most human Kami start with Willpower 3, Gnosis 1, but no Rage. Purchasing the power Spirit Ties can increase Gnosis to 6 in human Kami. The Berserker power gives Kami five points of Rage.

4) Choose one to three Kami powers. Keep the Kami's purpose, and how they perform the role Gaia gave them, in mind. A survivalist who protects elephants from ivory poachers might have Chameleon Coloration and Darksight to better hunt the hunters. The peaceful swami dedicated to leading the soul-sick away from materialism might have Aura of Tranquility and Heart Sense. The urban farmer fighting to keep development from swallowing her garden might do so with Plant Animation and Curse of Gaia.

5) Human Kami have five dots to spend in Backgrounds. They can take up to three points in the following Backgrounds: Allies, Contacts and Resources. Given the drive to fulfill their purpose, they must have at least one point of the Fate Background, but up to five isn't unreasonable.

6) Human Kami are the only Kami who receive freebie points. They have 21 freebie points to spend. Each new Kami power costs 7 freebies. Only human Kami receive freebie points.

Animal Hide

Animal Kami are made almost exactly like human Kami, with a few minor changes:

1) Animal Kami tend to favor Physical and Mental Attributes above Social Attributes, but they have the same number of points to spend between primary, secondary and tertiary categories. Put six dots into the primary category, four in the second and three in the tertiary. As with human Kami, each Attribute starts with one dot.

2) Animal Kami prioritize Ability categories like human Kami. Assign eleven dots in the primary category, seven in the secondary, and three in the tertiary. Lupus ability restrictions (W20, p.76) apply.

3) Animal Kami start with Willpower 2 and Gnosis 3, but no Rage. Purchasing the power Spirit Ties can increase Gnosis to 8 in animal Kami. Like human Kami, Berserker gives animal Kami five points of Rage.

4) Animals that are larger than humans have increased traits as though they had already purchased the Size power. Up to the size of a lion or a horse, adjust their traits as though they had purchased Size once. Creatures up to the size of an elephant or orca adjust their traits as though they had purchased Size twice. These natural adjustments do not count against the number of powers available. Even larger Kami, including the oceanic Rorqual, use the rules for Kami of the land (below).

Animals that are smaller than humans have decreased maximum Attributes and a bonus to hiding and evasion, as if they had purchased the reductive version of Size power.

A large dog has the equivalent of one purchase of Size. A house cat or fox has two innate purchases of Size. Mice, most birds and small lizards have three purchases. These do not count against the number of powers available.

Unless the Kami in particular is flawed by design, they never have less than the standard seven Health Levels, regardless of size.

5) All animal Kami are immune to the Delirium without having to take a power. In addition to the one-to-three powers they gain for being Kami, animal Kami also receive the powers that let them function as their mundane animal counterparts. An osprey Kami has the Wings she needs to fly, a rhino Kami receives Armored Hide, and many predators gain the powers Claws and Fangs and Darksight. They gain up to three powers appropriate to their species, and one-to-three additional powers to fulfill their purpose as Kami.

6) Animal Kami have three points to spend on Backgrounds. Most animal Kami favor Fate, and must take at least one point in it. Animal Kami who are social enough make friends worthy of the Backgrounds Allies and Contacts. Sadly, even the handsome hoard of a clever raven is rarely worth enough to be considered Resources.

Tree Bark and Topsoil

Some Kami begin their existence without sentience. Kami of the flora and Kami of the soil are alien even to Garou to whom spirits are the norm. They don't necessarily need to function in the same arenas as more expressive, mobile Kami, but in some cases can. Creation begins like human and animal Kami:

1) Prioritize three categories of Attributes: Physical, Social and Mental. Put six dots into the primary category, four in the second and three in the tertiary. As with human Kami, each Attribute starts with one dot. Many land and plant Kami that can't communicate with humans or shapeshifters may never use some Attributes outside of specific Kami powers. If Gaia gives normal-sized plant Kami them the ability to move freely, create them using the systems for animal Kami.

2) Prioritize three categories of Abilities: Talents, Skills, and Knowledges. Assign eleven dots in the primary category, seven in the secondary, and three in the tertiary. Like Attributes, many Abilities may not have an active role in the everyday existence of the Kami. Plant and land Kami can perceive themselves and their surroundings as a similarly sized spirit.

3) Kami of the land and plant Kami start with Willpower 3 and Gnosis 5, but no Rage. Purchasing the power Spirit Ties can increase Gnosis to 10 in plant and land Kami. Like other Kami, Berserker gives land and plant Kami five points of Rage.

HEALTH OF THE MOUNTAIN

Kami of the land and plant Kami are beyond the scale of claws and weapons, and as such do not have health levels. Instead, destroying a chosen orchard or the face of a mountain requires destruction on a large scale. That isn't to say these Kami aren't in danger from a dedicated First Team of fomor or a careless pack of Garou. Through a combination of successful Feats of Strength and widespread vandalism, even the largest redwood titan will fall. Even the Rorqual, the gargantuan living caerns of the Rokea, are so large that attackers are unlikely to fatally wound them by claws alone.

In some cases, the death of a vast Kami is a matter of changing it. Paving over a dusty playground Kami destroys it as thoroughly as scattering its dirt to the wind. Converting an urban garden Kami into the location of a O'Tolley's franchise is unlikely to be survivable, even if the lot itself remains intact.

4) All plant and land Kami are immune to the Delirium. Many powers that animal and human can take without a second thought have no use to the Kami of root and Kami of soil. Darksight, Mega-Attribute, Claws and Fangs, Wings — these aren't likely to provide any benefit to an idyllic hillside or ancient redwood. To remedy this, certain powers exist only for the use of flora and earth Kami. Land Kami begin with one-to-three powers.

5) Like animal Kami, land and plant Kami have three points to spend on Backgrounds, and must take at least one point in the Fate Background. Other Backgrounds are rare among the plant and land Kami. The Allies Background can represent fauna protective of a land Kami's territory. Resources can represent a landscape's natural resources, from the sought-after wood of rare trees to a seam of precious metal that the Kami can push to the surface.

Powers

Each Kami is unique. Few family or breed templates exist for the kind of powers a Kami might develop. They don't generally have more than three or four unique abilities, but that's a guideline more than a rule. The special abilities listed here are not a comprehensive list of the powers inherent to Kami. The Storyteller has the last word in what can be a Kami power. Some of the powers listed

BORROWING FROM MONSTERS

The following fomori powers (W20, p.429) are particularly appropriate for Kami use; others may also be appropriate given very particular purposes.

Animal Control, Armored Hide, Armored Skin, Berserker, Chameleon Coloration, Claws and Fangs, Darksight, Extra Speed, Gaseous Form, Homogeneity, Immunity to the Delirium, Invisibility, Lashing Tail, Mega-Attribute, Regeneration, Sense the Unnatural, Size Shift, Spirit Ties, Umbral Passage, Water Breathing, Wings

here are meant for the immobile Kami of the land and plant Kami. Some Kami, like the massive Rorqual, blur the distinction of Gaia's chosen.

Over time, a Kami can develop new abilities — with Gaia's blessing. If using the Kami creation system above, new powers cost (current number of powers x 3) experience points.

- **Aura of Tranquility:** This power is always in effect, though the Kami may turn it off at will. The Kami radiates an aura peacefulness that permeates the beings around it. Anyone caught in the aura feels calm overwhelm them, and the ability to initiate conflict slips through their claws like sand.

System: This power is active until the Kami turns it off. No one in (Willpower x 3) yards may act in a violent manner or spend Rage without a struggle. To act violently, they must make an opposed Willpower roll (difficulty 7) with the Kami, after which they may act violently for the rest of the scene.

- **Beast of Burden:** The Kami can accept the suffering, pain and injuries of another onto herself. Wounds heal, illnesses fade and diseases of the mind abate. Though the effect is normally temporary, the Kami can sacrifice her own permanent well-being to give succor in the long term.

System: The Kami must touch the subject, skin to skin. For every point of Willpower the Kami spends, she may heal a single health level, derangement, or sickness from the target, though she also takes a level of lethal damage. As soon as the Kami's wounds heal, the illnesses, derangements and wounds return to the original bearer — though healed as if an equal amount of time has passed. Effectively, the Kami does the healing for the injured. Kami with Regeneration can stave off the automatic healing, else the wounds will return too quickly to be useful.

- **Curse of Gaia:** The Kami can leverage her own Geasa against a foe she believes is acting to the detriment

of Gaia's will. In addition to imparting a semblance of her own obligation to Gaia, she can increase or decrease the severity of the punishment for breaking the taboo at a cost of her own spiritual strength. These punishments can manifest as bad luck, physical deformities and obvious, supernatural curses. Particularly invested Kami can even slay an offender, or turn them to brittle stone.

System: The Kami speaks her Geas aloud so the subject can hear it, and rolls Perception + Occult with a difficulty equal to the subject's Willpower. If successful, she imparts her exact Geas on the subject for a day per success. Should he break it, she will become immediately aware, and can spend a point of Gnosis to deal a level of lethal damage to the offender. She can spend as much Gnosis as she rolled successes, minus one for every day the subject has obeyed the Geas. This manifests as the worst possible luck imaginable — twisted ankles, falling stones, cars driving too close to the road.

- **Elemental Resistance:** The purpose of a Kami often leads it into places Gaia never meant her species to go; dangerous places that threaten to burn or crush creatures who should never have been there in the first place. Fortunately, these Kami are shielded against the predations of the elements that would do them in. Occasionally, a Kami even displays resistance to an unnatural element, like balefire or the calcifying webs of pattern-spiders.

System: For every purchase of Elemental Resistance, the Kami can add two dice to her soak against a specific element. Additional purchases can give her additional resistances, or improve upon the ones that already exist up to a total of six additional soak dice.

- **Footpads:** The Kami's feet are padded like a mountain lion's, making quiet approaches almost painfully easy.

System: The Kami subtracts 2 from the difficulty of any Stealth roll made to move silently.

- **Gifted Kami:** The Kami can learn Level One or Two Lupus, Auspice or Tribal Gifts. In some very rare cases, Kami may learn the Gifts of a lost tribe or extinct Changing Breed, though in the case of any Gift a Kami knows, they lack the means to teach them to Garou or other shapeshifters. Each Gift leaves a physical mark on the Kami, somehow related to the function of the Gift. Spirit Speech may leave a Kami's voice wispy and ephemeral, Heightened Senses may put a slight point to her ears, or increase the size of her pupils. The Kami must have the resources to use any Gift she acquires.

System: Each purchase of **Gifted Kami** grants access to one Gift. If the Gift requires Rage, she must have the **Berserker** power.

- **Heart Sense:** With this power, a Kami can see in the heart of an individual. She can determine spiritual allegiance (Wyrms, Weaver, Gaia, other), guilt or innocence,

their true shape, their foremost desires and connections to their past.

System: The Kami spends 1 Gnosis and rolls Perception + Empathy (difficulty 7). Every success grants one piece of information as described above.

- **Longevity:** This power is sometimes necessary for short-lived species to become Kami at all. In those cases, it manifests before the Kami has discovered any of her blessings — before she can really be called Kami. It allows Kami to live to great age, though it doesn't entirely halt the process. Kami aren't static creatures, even as mountains or glaciers. They age, but slower, and they never suffer the effects of infirmity.

System: Each purchase of Longevity increases the Kami's lifespan by tenfold. It can be taken multiple times, but after five purchases the Kami's life will continue effectively without a natural end. Kami of the land are effectively immortal without purchasing this power.

- **Mercy:** Sometimes a Kami's nature is at odds with her purpose. This is never truer than with predators. It can be hard to put that nature aside, and work with creatures she's been eating all her life. With Mercy, a Kami can be less careful with her urges. It dulls her claws and blunts her teeth, giving her the freedom to let the animal out. In the case of humans and Kami that use tools, Mercy extends to them — drawing the fatality out of bullet and the sharpness from knives.

System: The Kami can activate this power as a reflexive action. Any damage a character does after the power is activated heals completely at the end of the scene. If the Kami kills her victim, they will wake from unconsciousness sometime in the next scene.

- **Piercing Gaze:** Sometimes it only takes eye contact to prevent a predator from considering the Kami prey. With a glance, the Kami can make anyone it looks at uncomfortable, and uncertain of their place on the food chain. Without a word, the Kami can drive away incursions into her territory, or shake down a captive.

System: The Kami rolls Perception + Intimidation, difficulty equal to the target's Willpower. The target suffers a +2 difficulty to all Willpower rolls for one turn per success.

- **Plant Animation:** A Kami with this power can bid the flora to do her bidding. Vines ensnare her foes, branches sweep her enemies off their feet, even fields of grass impede the progress of pursuers.

System: For every point of Gnosis the Kami spends, any targets that remain within ten yards of her suffer a -1 penalty to all dice pools for the scene, up to -3. There must be some manner of plant life nearby for this power to function.

- **Plant Kinship:** This power allows communication between Kami and any plant life. Communication is some-

what limited by the inexact intelligence of unawakened flora. It can be useful to determine changes in the plant's surrounding environment. Additionally, even plants she doesn't directly communicate with will do what they can to limit impeding a Kami with Plant Kinship. Natural irritants won't leave rashes, poison berries won't make her sick, and sticky brambles won't get tangled in her hair or clothes.

System: The effects are permanent, though speech doesn't necessarily give unawakened plant life much of import to say.

- **Ritekeeper:** The Kami can learn Garou rites, through actually performing them is particularly taxing. Most often, they're gifted with the knowledge of a Rite so they might pass it to Garou to whom it will be most useful.

System: The Kami knows Rites with a total level of her permanent Gnosis. In addition to any cost a Rite may have, the Kami must spend a point of Willpower to perform them. When teaching the Rite to a shapeshifter, the time it takes him to learn the rite is cut in half.

- **Season's Blessing:** A Kami can enforce a particular season on an area. When she first takes this power, she chooses the season with which she is attuned. Further purchases grant her the influence of additional seasons. A fall Kami can change the color of leaves from spring green to autumn brown, or bare entire swathes of branches. A winter Kami can bring snowfall in summertime.

System: Each purchase of this power grants a Kami influence over one particular season's trappings. To invoke a season, she rolls Charisma + Primal Urge (difficulty 7). One success allows a spring Kami to make flowers bloom through snow. Five can summon a blizzard in high summer.

- **Size:** While the power Size Shift allows for dramatic but temporary changes in mass, Size represents permanent changes in size and mass, both increases and decreases.

System: Size can be taken three times. Each purchase either increases or decreases the size of the Kami. Each increase adds one Health Level and one point of both Strength and Stamina. Each decrease reduces her maximum Strength and Stamina by one each, and increases the difficulty of rolls to spot her or to hit her in combat by 1.

- **Shapeshifter Kin:** The Kami is spiritually dedicated to one of the tribes of Garou, or to a specific Changing Breed. Even the callous among shapeshifters respect their Kami kin. Unlike the actual members of these specific tribes and Breeds, the Kami can have multiple allegiances, or even a universal connection to all the shapeshifters still dedicated to Gaia's service. Rumors persist of fomori who have similar connections to Black Spiral Dancers.

System: Each purchase grants an effective Pure Breed 3 with respect to a single tribe or Changing Breed. After five purchases the Pure Breed becomes universal to any Garou not tainted by the Wyrm. Because this isn't actually

the strength of their breeding, even Changing Breeds that do not possess the Pure Breed background are affected by this power.

- **Spirit Awakening:** The Kami is able to awaken the spirits of animals, plants or objects by talking, singing or performing for them. Spirits so awakened are almost always favorably inclined to the performer.

System: This power works similarly to the Rite of Spirit Awakening (W20, p.212), though the Kami rolls Charisma + Performance instead of Wits + Rituals.

- **Spirit Charm:** Similar to the power Gifted Kami, a Kami with Spirit Charm can learn the powers of spirits, so long as they are capable of using the Charm, and have the Gnosis or Rage to pay for it.

System: Each purchase of Spirit Charm grants access to one Charm. If the Charm requires Rage, she must have the Berserker power.

- **Spirit Kinship:** The Kami has powerful ties to Gaia's elementals. In times of danger, she may call upon those bonds and they will strive to aid her in her endeavors. The spirit's concept of help may differ from the Kami's.

System: The Kami reduces the difficulty of all social interactions with elementals by -2. If she spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Manipulation + Expression, she can urge an elemental to manifest where she is. Though the elemental will try to help as the Kami requests, they are notoriously fickle spirits.

- **Spirit Sense:** Not only does this power give the Kami a Garou's ability to peek across the Gauntlet, it gives her the means to peer into the both worlds at once to recognize the spiritual nature of those around her.

System: The Kami spends one point of Willpower and rolls Gnosis versus the local Gauntlet. If successful, she can peer into the Penumbra like any Garou. For an additional point of Willpower she can see in both worlds at once, and can identify Garou, Changing Breeds, and fomori by the interplay between worlds. A botch alerts local pattern-spiders — and while they may not be able to cross the Gauntlet themselves, agents of the Weaver will like be interested in their find.

- **Transformation:** The Kami is capable of limited shapeshifting.

System: Every purchase of this power allows the Kami to take an additional form. Each form shares her traits, but may have alternate powers equal to the number of times Transformation has been taken. A Kami with two purchases of Transformation has two alternate forms with two alternate powers each. Changing forms requires a Stamina + Primal Urge roll (difficulty 7).

- **Triatic Sense:** Like Heart Sense, Triatic Sense can determine which of the Triat a person is most closely allied. But unlike Heart Sense, it can also discern the influence



the Triat has on places and things. A skilled Kami can reveal supernaturally hidden agents of the Wyrn, Wyld or Weaver in places where their allegiance would stand out like a sore thumb.

System: The player rolls Perception + Occult. The difficulty depends on the influence of the Wyrn, Wyld or Weaver on a person or place. Determining a rampaging boar is a Gorgon would be difficulty 6, while following the trail of a pattern spider with an hour's lead would be difficulty 8. In locations dominated by the influence of one of the Triat, a Kami with **Triatic Sense** receives a -2 to the difficulty of the Perception + Awareness roll to discern agents of the other two.

- **Universal Tongue:** Kami who take this power can understand and speak to any living thing. This does not necessarily mean that the things to which they speak are capable of providing much useful knowledge or information.

System: This power's effects are permanent; it requires no roll or expenditure.

The Might of the Immobile

The stationary, stoic nature of the Kami of the earth leaves them limited in the powers that would benefit them. The following are Kami blessings specifically designed for those plant and land Kami who are missing out on the myriad of powers that benefit their more-mobile siblings.

- **Animate Self:** Kami born of land and plant can take this power to temporarily grant themselves motion. Stones lurch to push unwanted visitors off Kami mountain faces. Thick roots burst from the ground to entangle the foes of Kami oak trees.

System: The Kami spends one point of Gnosis and may move as she pleases for a scene, using her Physical

POTENTIAL OF THE LEVIATHAN

The Rorqual and other massive animal Kami fill a strange gap between Kami of the land and their animal siblings. Too large to interact on a smaller scale and too mobile to be considered land Kami, these unusual beasts meet somewhere in the middle. As such, they can take the powers meant for either. The following are appropriate powers for the Rorqual and similarly gigantic Kami:

Animal Control, Berserker, Chameleon Coloration, Gaseous Form, Homogeneity, Invisibility, Sense the Unnatural, Spirit Ties, Umbral Passage, Water Breathing, Aura of Tranquility, Beast of Burden, Curse of Gaia, Heart Sense, Longevity, Plant Animation, Plant Kinship, Season's Blessing, Shapeshifter Kin, Spirit Awakening, Spirit Kinship, Spirit Sense, Universal Tongue, Lord of the Land, Spirit Den, Wellspring.

Attributes directly on the world around her. For Kami of the land, this generally means moving items and creatures within the boundaries of their earthly bodies. For the flora with Gaia's blessing, if their scale doesn't prohibit movement, they needn't worry about such limitations. Animated plant Kami roughly the same size as a human being have no trouble moving like one. Without the protection of their idleness, they have the same defenses and Health Levels as human or animal Kami.

- **Incarnate:** When the Kami of the land and earth-bound plant Kami grow truly restless, Incarnate can give them a rare respite from their isolation. The Kami creates an avatar in human or animal skin that allows them to interact on a level they were incapable of as landmarks.

System: The Kami can create a single human or animal avatar with a single Kami power. She can purchase this power multiple times, either to gain different forms or to give her incarnated body gains a new Kami power. She can manifest one avatar at a time. Incarnated bodies use the Kami's Attributes, Abilities, and other traits; their body has seven health levels. It costs 3 points of Gnosis to Incarnate. The Kami's original body doesn't change, but her awareness and her blessings transfer into her avatar. She can transfer her consciousness back to her original form as an instant action, her avatar crumbles to soil when she does. If her Incarnated body dies, there's no coming back. The Kami is dead. While Incarnated, powers specific to immobile Kami do not function.

- **Lord of the Land:** Immobile Kami may take this power to gain a constant awareness of their massive bodies. Her senses are everywhere she touches and just a bit beyond. There's no hiding from a Kami with Lord of the Land.

System: The Kami only needs a single success on a Perception + Alertness (difficulty 6) to detect anything that happens on her surface and up to (Willpower x 3) yards above it. If someone attempts to cloak their presence with magic she rolls whatever the power demands, but if she fails she's still aware someone is on her somewhere. Rorqual may take this power.

- **Moonstone:** This power gives the Kami's body properties similar to a caern's pathstone, allowing Moon Bridges to link directly to her person.

System: This power does not automatically confer the Rite of the Opening Bridge, though it makes that rite possible within the bounds of the Kami herself. The Kami must also purchase the power: Spirit Den to purchase Moonstone. Rorqual may take this power.

- **Safe Place:** This power effectively removes access to the Kami from the Umbra. She has no Penumbral shadow, and attempts to Step Sideways near her are tremendously difficult. Even when successful, they simply eject the invader at the Kami's nearest boundary.

System: The Gauntlet around the Kami out to (Gnosis x5) yards becomes a staggering difficulty 9 to cross for travelers in the Umbra. Success does not place the potential invader on the Kami herself, but just outside the area of increased Gauntlet.

- **Spirit Den:** The Gauntlet of the Kami's land-body is thin enough that passing through the Kami's center is as effective as Stepping Sideways into the Umbra. Her reflection in the Penumbra is identical to her earthly body.

System: No roll is needed to pass from the Umbra to the Kami, and vice versa. If this power is taken with Safe Place, treat the reflection as if the Rite of the Shrouded Glen (W20, p.207) has been performed successfully. Rorqual may take this power.

- **Wellspring:** The Kami acts in much the same manner as caern, providing spiritual sustenance for any shapeshifters who spent enough time in her boundaries.

System: The Kami spends two points of Gnosis per caern level, up to ten points to make a Level 5 caern. For the next lunar month, she is a caern of that level for all purposes, though she does not have a type. The Kami can terminate this power at any time before the end of the month. When it ends, she regains half of the Gnosis she invested to become a Caern. All Rorqual possess this power for free.

Sample Kami

The following Kami are examples for the Storyteller to use, either dropping one or two into his Chronicle as-is or as inspiration for unique Kami that will enhance his Chronicle. The nine Kami in this section are examples only – the true number of Kami, including Rorqual, is up to the Storyteller, and any or none of these examples may exist in his World of Darkness.

Agatha Prim

History: Agatha began collecting the gross ones first. Before she was old enough for school, she would skip down to the little creek on her family's Oklahoma farm and catch what her mother affectionately called 'critters'. It started off with frogs, to her mother's disgust. She graduated onto lizards and snakes before long, then jackrabbits and the neighbor's lambs. It'd sometimes be days before her mother found the animals. More often than not, she'd find them with Agatha, sleeping a bed full of dozing snakes and peaceful mice. At that point Agatha was still willing to part with her slithering friends.

Things changed for Agatha when she brought a stray cat home with two broken legs. When her father forbade her keeping it, Agatha became all but feral. She scratched and screamed at her dad until both he and Agatha's mother were afraid something might be very wrong with their daughter. They let her keep the cat, convinced its inevitable demise would shake her obsession with wildlife. To her parent's surprise, the cat started walking soon after Agatha took it in.

As the years went by, Agatha's interest in helping animals grew. Much to the chagrin of her family, her interest in people almost totally evaporated. She went to vet school, but couldn't stand the teachers. She worked at clinics, but couldn't deal with answering to superiors who didn't care for animals as thoroughly as she. What made it worse was how good she was at caring for her furred and feathered friends. Agatha is savant of animal care, capable of beast-coaxing feats that would've been all over the internet – if she didn't cut herself off from most people in the late 1980s.

Agatha has become even less interested in people as the years have gone on. Her work for local non-profits is a trouble she forces herself to endure, if only for the sake of her four-legged companions. Despite that, Agatha is something of a local legend among volunteers and veterinarians in the state of Oklahoma. She can care for anything. Her small, off-grid ranch is a frightening cross between a vet-clinic and a nuclear bunker, with animals from the mundane

to the exotic recuperating in barns and cool cages. Agatha cares for anything that isn't a person. Birds, bears, lions, even an alligator from the zoo some heartless kids fed a sharp tin can.

Agatha serves Gaia unknowingly. Many of the animals she cares for are Kinfolk of the Changing Breeds, though that's entirely coincidental. Agatha's purpose is to help other Kami come into their strength, and through exposure to her gentle touch the process happens much faster. Agatha doesn't know it, but she's played a key but subtle part in several victories against the Wyrms.

Appearance: Agatha is a handsome, dark-skinned woman with the most severe eyes a person can have without being angry. She dresses in utilitarian canvas clothes she keeps immaculate despite the frequent proximity to wounded animals. She's getting on in years, but a few streaks of silver in her black hair only make her look more intimidating.

Roleplaying Notes: Agatha puts animals before human beings, including herself. She'll face down the fiercest trouble to protect the smallest mouse, and she isn't bad with a shotgun. She's a sharp-tongued, harsh-eyed veterinarian who doesn't suffer fools gladly. Her exterior may soften a little in the face of someone who cares as much for wildlife as she does, but if she doubts his sincerity he's in a world of trouble. Agatha doesn't believe in werewolves, spirits or any of that nonsense, and until confronted with facts she'll rationalize or ignore anything weird she sees.

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3 Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 2

Skills: Animal Ken 5, Crafts 3, Drive 2, Firearms 2, Survival 2

Knowledges: Academics 2, Medicine 2, Science 1

Powers: Beast of Burden, Animal Control, Immunity to the Delirium, Piercing Gaze

Geas: Nothing deserves to suffer.

Gnosis: 1; **Willpower:** 6

Plot Hooks

- Agatha has come to the attention of a local Theurge as a chosen of Gaia. He advocates bringing the woman into the fold and cementing her role as an ally, but his septmates are certain that doing so will put the woman in needless danger. The Theurge believes she is already in danger, and should know more of the war she's been fighting for decades.

- It isn't just the animals that Agatha cares for that become Kami. The land beneath her ranch-clinic is soon to awaken as a Kami of the soil, and the elementals of the region are seeking Garou to protect it during the final

moments of transition. The howling close by isn't coming from a nearby sept.

- After a scrape with nearby Garou left him mortally wounded and packless, a lupus Black Spiral Dancer is now in the care of Agatha Prim. She isn't about to let anyone two-legged onto her ranch to investigate, but as the Wurm-tainted wolf grows halier, Agatha's future looks less promising. It's unfortunate that she is prepared to lay down her life for this sickly wolf.

Cousin Rabbit

History: Cousin Rabbit is one of so many siblings even he doesn't remember all their names. That's pretty much all he doesn't remember. The small, gray-furred rabbit has a memory so broad he knows the favorite TV shows of every member of the Sept of the Bronze by heart — despite not quite understanding what a television is. He doesn't have time for that! With all the information to distribute, messages to send, warnings to warn, alarms to ring, he only has so much time in the day!

The rabbit serves as a go-between for the Bone Gnawer Sept of the Bronze in North Philadelphia and the Ratkin nest secreted away in the sewers of nearby Camden, just across the Delaware. And he has since he can remember. The Ratkin and the Garou in the area have a pretty good thing going, though neither group is particularly interested in

direct interaction. They keep their territory pretty separate, but work at similar goals. Organization is important, and that's where Cousin Rabbit comes in.

He's quick, he's attentive, and he delivers messages word-for-word. If he forgets, he doesn't even try to fake it. It's back across the river for a reminder. It's made his memory pretty fierce, particularly for a prey animal who isn't exactly calm around wolves. Fortunately for everyone involved, no one has tried to eat him yet.

Appearance: Cousin Rabbit is a small rabbit much older than he should be. He's careful, smart and quick to run from anything that even half resembles danger. Even so, he's got a few good bite marks on him, including a missing bit of his ear from the one time he took the wrong path through a backyard with a very big dog. His fur is thinning, graying and a little patchy, but he claims it gives him character.

Roleplaying Notes: Cousin Rabbit is very aware of time. He's been around for a few years and he's starting to feel his age. He sometimes gets jealous of the long-lived Garou and their kin, but that's just another thing he doesn't have time for. He has places to be. He doesn't really like the Bone Gnawers, because they don't take him seriously; their "playful teasing" almost always involves eating him. The Ratkin are okay, though. They always want to talk more than he wants to listen, and their messages are hard to remember in full. It's good that he loves to run. He does a lot of it.

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Empathy 1, Expression 3



Skills: Animal Ken 1, Etiquette 1, Stealth 3, Survival 2

Knowledges: Enigmas 2, Investigation 1

Powers: Universal Language, Gifted Kami (Speed of Thought), Sense the Unnatural, Extra Speed, Size (x2)

Geas: Never paraphrase, silly rabbit.

Gnosis: 3; **Willpower:** 3

Plot Hooks

- A new pack of Garou has moved into Philadelphia at about the same time Cousin Rabbit has gone missing. The Sept of the Bronze doesn't have much issue with the little hairball's absence, but the Ratkin are already making a fuss. They're convinced a new face chomped on their friend, and as far as they're concerned, it's an eye for an eye.

- Cousin Rabbit is way off course, at a sept he doesn't know, begging for help from Garou who would just as soon eat him as give him a second glance. Something has happened with the Ratkin of Camden and the Sept of the Bronze isn't interested in breaking the thin peace between their Changing Breed allies by invading their nest—at least, not on the word of an excitable rabbit.

- Something is hunting animal Kami, and only by Cousin Rabbit's speed and wit was he able to avoid being its next victim. He describes it a big, black dog with too many teeth. Spirits in the area have spotted similar beasts. Many of them—more than just a pack. Kami are rare enough that Cousin Rabbit might be their only target, but that's a lot of dogs for one mangy rabbit.

Drosera glanduligera

History: Strictly speaking, the Pimpernel Sundew plant eats flies and insects, and maybe small frogs. It was never meant to eat anything large. And yet in this case, something went wrong. *Drosera* does not remember its time before its exaltation very well. The plant is vaguely aware that some sort of universal balance was disrupted and an outside force made it grow too large and started feeding it the flesh of animals and people—and even werewolves.

First it remembered feeling regret. Then disgust. Then remorse, and a desire to repent for its part in violating natural laws. In that moment, it became a thinking thing, filled with Gaia's love and forgiveness. Since then, it has served Gaia happily as one of Her Kami.

Drosera eats. That is its purpose. It can recycle just about anything into organic matter. If anyone tosses in even the indestructible and impossibly corrupt. The plants wide maw, will grab hold and slowly but surely digest whatever is fed to it. The soil around the plant is rich with the waste and super fertile. Currently, the *Drosera* grows in an abandoned and overgrown botany laboratory. It does not know how it got there and is too big to move.

Appearance: *Drosera* is a giant carnivorous plant that, when open, looks a bit like a giant split kiwi, shiny and

slick. Its center is a cluster of long white tendrils with sticky red spherical tips that can shoot out at alarming speeds to catch prey and drag them into the mouth, for digestion. At that point, the mouth closes around the prey and it digests. Slowly. Because of the Kami's size it can grab and pull in a Crinos-form werewolf, though digesting such a werewolf would take days.

Roleplaying Notes: *Drosera* feels very bad about the warriors of Gaia it ate in the past, though it doesn't know how many there were or why it ate them. It also feels very bad about all the innocent humans and pigs it ate. At its size, it gets hungry a lot, and loves making more fertile soil that Gaia can put to use elsewhere. It is very eager to eat things for Gaia. It understands when someone is trying to feed it something it shouldn't eat, and will not accept such meals. It regrets that eating sentient things is probably very painful and takes a long time. Still, it will do so without hesitation. Because of that, it will often ask others to kill its meals first.

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 4, Brawl 4, Primal Urge 3

Skills: Survival 3

Knowledges: Enigmas 3, Occult 4

Powers: Animate Self, Longevity, Plant Animation

Geas: Can eat only what is corrupt.

Gnosis: 5; **Willpower:** 3

Plot Hooks

- Someone or some thing has been feeding *Drosera* between meals. *Drosera*'s keeper, a Silent Strider, doesn't know how they get in, and *Drosera* doesn't understand much about who feeds it. *Drosera*'s keeper charges the characters with finding out who else is bringing the *Drosera* meals, and what it's eating!

- The pack has found the something that they thought impossible: an unkillable, immortal spirit that is too wicked to keep alive. They could perhaps imprison it, but the spirit's ban is no help in stopping it. They hear of a creature of Gaia that can destroy anything. Now they are on a quest to find the *Drosera* so that they can destroy the indestructible.

- The Wurm would very very much like to get its tentacles into the *Drosera*. An entire chronicle could revolve around protecting the *Drosera* from direct attacks, attempts to create a hybrid, and otherwise protecting the plant from servants of corruption.

The Hive

History: It was not one bee, or even the queen, that became a Kami. Rather, the hive itself awoke to become a servant to Gaia, and as a result, so long as the hive exists,

it is a Kami. And the hive is pissed. It does not care about humanity, or the people it has stung to death. It does not care who it attacks. It needs to survive. The hive is dying. All over the world, hives like it, are dying. And so it attacks anything it perceives as a threat. Mostly, this is has involved swarming and killing cell tower maintenance workers, but as the hive becomes more aware and sophisticated, it may go after anyone with a cell phone. It doesn't know if cellphone towers are the actual cause of the decline in bee population. The science is questionable, but more importantly, people believe this is the cause, and that belief has become the hive's purpose through Gaia.

Appearance: Individual members of the hive aren't especially impressive, though their stringers are more vicious looking and their stripes seem to reflect glyphs from some angles. The hive is most impressive when it swarms. It becomes a cloud more pollen green-yellow than black, and it seems to glow even in daylight.

Roleplaying Notes: The hive has no compassion. It does not care who lives and who dies, and it is not particularly impressed by the Warriors of Gaia or her other chosen. Something is killing off their entire species, and they will do what they must to forestall and perhaps undo that death sentence. They are not bloodthirsty, however, and they can be reasoned with if someone comes to them with a clear sympathy for their situation and understanding of their purpose.

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1

Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation 4, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Primal Urge 2

Skills: Stealth 3, Survival 4

Knowledges: Investigation 3

Powers: Gaseous Form, Claws and Fangs, Size (x3), Size Shift

Geas: The hive cannot see anyone carrying royal jelly.

Gnosis: 3; **Willpower:** 3

Plot Hooks

- A powerful spirit has requested honey from the hive. The hive will not simply give up their honey, not without a trade. If the pack can get into the city and destroy the holdings and presence of a major cell phone provider, the hive will grant the pack the right to harvest its honey.

- An important breed of quasi mystical flowers cannot seem to propagate on its own. The pack needs to breed them for an important ritual or as part of a rank challenge. After meditation and vision, a pack member becomes sure that the hive can pollinate the plants because of their mystical nature. What can they offer murderous bees to convince them to assist the pack?

- The Weaver will not leave the hive alone. As such, it has created a breed of hornets to attack the hive. The conflict has destroyed all the insects and animals in the area, and has started spilling into areas populated by humans. Their attention could result in situations that don't just violate the Litany, but rend the Veil whole cloth. Without understanding much about what the hive really is, which side will the pack join?

Misha Bush

History: Misha's daddy went into business just after she was born, and did well. Soon, he was wheeling and dealing with the sort of fat cats that could have bought and sold his ass three generations ago. Misha grew up a lesser corporate princess, thanks to her daddy's success. When she turned twelve, his company merged with another and daddy started getting weird. He'd work all sorts of hours. He divorced his wife and kicked her out, then manipulated the courts to keep Misha even though he'd turned into a shitty father.

Misha's 16 now, and she's pretty sure that she can fix not just her dad, but a whole lot of things if she can just drag his company down. She's committed what is technically called corporate espionage over the past year, and in the process discovered that her father's company is doing some really disgusting, inhuman things. She doesn't know about the Triat, or the Garou Nation, but she knows that if she even hopes to redeem her father, she's going to have to stop what's going on.

Appearance: Misha is a lovely 16-year-old girl with natural hair and warm brown skin. She took horseback riding and gymnastics in school because that's what all the girls of the other corporate guys did. Now she uses that physical talent to sneak into offices and climb windows. She'll dress like a prep most of the time, but at night, she's a little girl ninja out to destroy her father's company.

Roleplaying Notes: Misha is incredibly gifted, with the blessings of Gaia and an incredible mind. She's also still only 16 years old, and so she's very conflicted by the prospect of stopping her father when she still loves him so much. She's aware that she probably can't save him, but she can't really admit it to herself. When the chips are down, she'll choose her purpose over her family because Gaia has blessed her with at least that much clarity of mind.

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity, 3 Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Expression 1

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Crafts 2, Drive 1, Stealth 3, Survival 1

Knowledges: Academics 1, Computer 3, Enigmas 1, Investigation 3, Law 2, Science 1, Technology 1



Powers: Chameleon Coloration, Darksight, Universal Tongue

Geas: Intertec Core Unlimited must fall, no matter the costs.

Gnosis: 1; **Willpower:** 6

Plot Hooks

- Misha knows what the characters are, though she's got the wrong idea about what they do. From the files she found in her father's business she thinks they're political terrorists, but that doesn't bother her. She approaches them, trying to blackmail them into helping her stop her father. She doesn't know how special she is, but the characters will find out if they try to attack her or harm her in any way.

- The pack was attacking Intertec for their own reasons, when they ran across Misha inside the building, already performing some sabotage. She displays her power pretty much immediately, signifying what an incredible use she could be. But is it ethical to use a teenager as a soldier in their war — and could they stop her even if they wanted to?

- It's a small world, but one of the characters actually knows Misha's family. Her family have noticed the girl is struggling since her parents have broken up. Visiting with her would quickly show any Garou that the girl has gone through some kind of drastic spiritual change. But what is she? What has she become? And how can they get her to open up about what she's planning to do?

The One-Oh-Oh

History: California Highway 100 was made to get logging trucks to the old growth near the Humboldt port. It slides like a worm of dark scales through the some of the best, most ancient wood a timber mill could ask for. Early on, it did its job without complaint. Huge, eighteen-wheeled monsters tore down its winding length to places where tall, powerful redwoods were slain. Everyday, the One-Oh-Oh endured the countless tires of multi-ton trucks and was content.

Eons of redwood died around the highway before it was aware of their cries. At first, it didn't really understand what it was hearing. After a few more years and a thousand more wracking sobs from the forest, Highway 100 decided enough was enough. One day, without ever having had an opinion, let alone one on logging, it called its sympathy to the trees and they called back. The sequoia redwoods sacrificed one of their tallest champions to fall across Highway 100's middle just as a big, overweight truck was carrying the murdered bodies of their brothers back to the sawmill.

It happened three more times before people started talking. The accidents made headlines in Northern California. News crews, interviews with timber mill executives, and investigations into safe driving practices put the lumber industry in

the public eye. The poorly-regulated industry couldn't stand that kind of scrutiny. It didn't last another five years.

For now, the One-Oh-Oh is content. It doesn't hate the little cars that rumble along its skin, and it adores when a family pulls onto its shoulder to watch elk prance through the trees. It can't abide trucks, however. It worries that every big semi that rumbles over its surface is going to start the trees screaming again.

Given the number of accidents, it's no surprise not many trucks use Highway 100 anymore.

Appearance: In postcards, California Highway 100 looks fake. It's too dark, too clean, and too full of green and brown. It's a tongue of rich, black asphalt between teeth of redwood bark. It splits the forest like a winding serpent worming down a twisted path. A dozen tourist traps dot each side: redwood burl carvings, forest tours, even the anatomically correct fiberglass ox of logging legend Paul Bunyan. It's a quiet, idyllic drive full of distractions that beg passers-by to stop.

Roleplaying Notes: One-Oh-Oh isn't actually the asphalt of the Highway, but it might as well be. The corridor of aging redwoods takes its identity from the somewhat infamous road. The highway is a ponderous Kami, in both thought and action. It's not the oldest Kami of land and soil, but it's prepared to be. There's no hurry in its choices. nothing malicious in its thoughts. It has a lot of road to decide if one of the vehicles along its middle is a threat to the trees.

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 1, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Empathy 3

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Crafts 2, Drive 3, Etiquette 2, Survival 2

Knowledge: Enigmas 2, Investigation 3, Occult 2, Technology 2

Powers: Plant Kinship, Plant Animation, Curse of Gaia

Geas: Do not let the redwoods come to harm.

Gnosis: 5; **Willpower:** 3

Plot Hooks

- With the fall of the Northern California logging industry the economy never quite recovered. The nearest thing to a replacement industry is crystal meth, and the labs in the deeps of the redwood forest have caused their fair share of fires. Now One-Oh-Oh is becoming suspicious of any vehicle on its blacktop. The number of accidents has drawn the attention of both the local sept and the bitter, Wyrn-tainted spirits of the lumber mills.

- A new "sustainable logging" initiative, backed by a heretofore unheard-of lumber mill, has just been voted into existence under the pretense that it'll restore the local

economy. One-Oh-Oh hears the trees screaming. This new initiative is denying One-Oh-Oh its vengeance by circumventing the highway with river barges and temporary access roads. Its rage is building, and several concerned spirits have fled to the characters, hoping they can help

- High-tech vans and scientists clad in environmental suits litter the stretch of freeway. The men and machines both bear the logo of Developmental Neogenics Amalgamated, and One-Oh-Oh has gone silent. The spirit of a truly ancient redwood has abandoned its post to seek aid, afraid that the highway's ability to protect the trees doesn't extend to itself — and DNA's geologists don't seem interested in trees.

Opinnartokua

History: Opinnartokua has never been still. He was born swimming in the darkest depths of the ocean. Before the calling to move and move endlessly, Opinnartokua did so of his own volition. Motion is his birthright.

As he grew, and the world changed, his motion became something more. A dedication to Sea and to the ever-churning tide. A dance he shared with a partner he knew was there, but could not touch or see. He rebuked every potential mate, knowing his truest love was just beyond the curve of the horizon. No force in all the oceans could give him pause so long as he could hear her call.

For longer than the world has had men and their boats, he has followed her song. He chases the wake of his distant lover as he has done for centuries. He has seen, learned, forgotten so much of this world as he swims forever forward. He has met others like him, old and ancient, but he is always eldest.

He has even found a tribe! They revere him, though he cannot understand why. They protect him, though they do not know that they are his wards. They love him, and he them, and so his song goes out to them; what little he can spare of it. He is saving his truest song for Her. She who is Sea, whose wake he chases. But his tribe are grateful for that tiny token, and they swim in their shark-shapes at his side, or sleep in their man-shapes on his breaching bulk. They are his tribe, and they need his company.

Opinnartokua knows he nears the end of his long journey, because Her song is growing quieter. Soon she will slow, and he will rest, and they will have many young to follow in the path they've worn through the water.

Appearance: Opinnartokua is an old blue whale. So old, that the surface of his body resembles more the craggy surface of great stone than it does a marine mammal. His body is peppered with scars both miniscule and immense. His hide has seen every weapon man has made to slay whales and break boats, and still he swims. Opinnartokua is a landmark and friend of the Rokea. The shark-shifters and their kin are never far from the rorqual.

Roleplaying Notes: Opinnartokua is blind, his fins are slow, he eats too little and he has never mated, but his existence is filled with joy. He loves Sea — Gaia — as few creatures can; she has been his wife since the day he heard her song, when there were no men or shapeshifters on land or in the waters. Though he has never seen her, he knows her very well. The song she sings is the voice of Sea to the prehistoric rorqual, and he is content so long as he can hear it. In recent years, her song has grown quieter. It does not worry him. To Opinnartokua, it means she is getting tired and soon he will finally see his love.

Physical: Strength 7 Dexterity 3, Stamina 8

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 1, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 1

Talents: Empathy 2, Leadership 1, Primal Urge 3

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 1, Survival 4

Knowledges: Enigmas 4, Investigation 4, Occult 3

Powers: Longevity, Mega-Attribute (x3), Shifter Kinship (Rokea), Wellspring

Geas: Never stop moving.

Gnosis: 3; **Willpower:** 3

Plot Hooks

- A massive Endron International tanker is in the path of the ancient rorqual. It's been some time since Endron public relations had the chance to spin a good, old fashioned oil spill. Endron is being so obvious about it there's little chance it isn't a trap.

- Something has turned Opinnartokua from his path. This has happened twice in recent memory. Massive disasters followed both. Given the danger, the rorqual's protector-Rokea have turned to the aid of the Changing Breeds of the land. Including the Garou.

- It's no secret that Oppinnartokua is dying, but a sept of the Same-Bito Rokea isn't willing to sit by and let it happen. Not while they can swim. A great meeting of the Beast Courts has failed to earn them aid. The Ahadi have turned them away. The Same-Bito have come to the West to seek sympathy for their cause, but the Atlantic Rokea's hostility toward their Eastern cousins threatens to leave Oppinnartokua's plight unresolved and many of the Sea's protectors dead.

Shallowbranch

History: Shallowbranch is young by the standards of trees, but old as Kami reckon time. She considers herself little more than a child, though the boughs of this weeping willow are wide and her trunk is strong. She's the only one of her kind, whether tree or Kami, on the bank of the murky, little river whose soil she grips so zealously between her roots.

Though Shallowbranch is off the beaten path, on a stretch of shore mostly left alone, plenty of people come

to rest beneath her limbs. She's a welcome respite from the Florida heat, the humid rain, and the fearsome wind. Travelers, transients, fishermen, young lovers; she'll give her shelter — both physical and emotional — to anyone who needs it. Beneath her branches dreams are gentle and worries struggle to exist.

More than once, Shallowbranch has given shelter to an enemy; someone who would do her great harm if they knew what she was. She abides it as easily as anything else. The most monstrous Black Spiral Dancer is as welcome as the most timid doe. She does not discriminate in her gifts, as that would be against everything she understands is good and right.

Occasionally, one of her wards will disappear in the night, and Shallowbranch doesn't entirely know why. If no harm comes to them, Shallowbranch doesn't mind. If the disappearance is peaceful she doesn't need an explanation. She's certain they're thankful for what little time they were able stay.

The truth is, with Shallowbranch's proximity to the Umbra, anyone who sleeps beneath her canopy has a chance of ending up in the Dream Zone (p. 42). The tranquility she exudes assures any such dreams are comfortable and quiet, but the tree Kami has no other influence over them.

Appearance: Shallowbranch is a beautiful, bright-green willow tree. She's as inviting as a warm smile, and the air under her lofty branches is temperate no matter the season. On most of her sides, the leafy tendrils of her arms reaches all the way to the ground, providing a rare source of comfort on the banks of a swampy river. Her trunk is scarred with a hundred hearts and names, carved by the well-meaning vandals she's never once had an ill-thought about.

Roleplaying Notes: Shallowbranch loves everyone. Even those that would chop her up and burn the scraps. The least of those troubles are the children who innocently carve names and affectionate slogans into her bark. It hurts, but she doesn't blame them. The worst are agents of the Destroyer who use her to hide from their reckoning. She doesn't blame them, either. She knows they're sick, and any harm she could bring them would do worse for Gaia than simply giving her enemies one night of peaceful rest. She hopes the attentive cradle of her boughs will give them pause when next they think to hurt someone.

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 1, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 1, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 2, Empathy 4, Primal Urge 4

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Etiquette 3, Survival 1

Knowledges: Medicine 2, Occult 1

Powers: Aura of Tranquility, Safe Place, Spirit Den

Geas: Provide hospitality to friends, and shelter even to foes.

Gnosis: 5; **Willpower:** 3

Plot Hooks

- Shallowbranch is the source of a contentious battle between conservationists and a small business that wants to uproot her to better facilitate their riverboat tours. If the business wins, it's unlikely Shallowbranch will survive. If the conservationists succeed, Shallowbranch will become too much of a local landmark to properly perform her duties as a Kami.

- One of the characters sleeps beneath Shallowbranch during a storm, and her dreams are uncharacteristically troubled. Nightmares so vivid they shake a callous Garou's heart. Without the ability to communicate with her protectors, this is the tree's only way to alert them to danger she's witnessed. A danger so fierce she risks violating her geas to share.

- A First Team of fomori are using the tree's thin Gauntlet to enter and exit the Umbra with impunity. They've claimed the weak spot beneath her branches as a shortcut to harass the local sept. They don't yet know the origin of this needle eye in reality, but the moment they do they're in a good position to end her. What's more, if they decide to let their superiors know the secret of their success, it could be bad news for more than just Shallowbranch.

Shrewton Village

History: Shrewton isn't the sort of place you walk out of. Not because the people are personally isolated, but because it is literally 50 miles in any direction from the next nearest human being. Shrewton doesn't appear particularly strange on the surface beyond its physical isolation.

Of course, it isn't so simple as all that. Gaia has a need for the children of Shrewton, and turned the village itself into a Kami. The population of 10,000 people is well aware that they live somewhere special, but they've got no idea how special.

Mostly, it guards the children. Adults are welcome to come and go and live whatever lives they prefer, but any child in Shrewton is under the Kami's special attention. It uses the powers at its disposal toward one end: allowing the children to dream. Good rest makes good dreams, but Gaia needs these specific children in this specific place dreaming away every night. Normally, the Kami doesn't need to do much, but it has in the past roused enough to subtly prevent a father from moving away with a child after a divorce. The actions of the Kami are subtle but unmistakable to anyone who knows where to look.

Appearance: Shrewton is a sunny little village of 10,000 people, with historic homes and buildings everywhere. The roads are mainly cobblestone in town, and the water that flows in drains when it rains is unusually clean. Beyond that, the children of Shrewton seem especially vibrant.

They always wake well rested and vivacious, and stay alert all day. They, along with the whole village, sleep heavily, but to the casual observer it's just a small town in the middle of nowhere.

It is only in the Umbra that the Kami's presence is obvious. The place is flooded with the spirits of children's dreams and nightmares. The spiritual reflection of the buildings all seem to have the same smiling house-face as in a child's drawing. The faces turn and watch things, smile, mouth to each other, and otherwise indicate that the old village is far more than it seems.

Roleplaying Notes: There is no real way to communicate directly with the Kami, and its actions are slow and subtle. An eave on a building falls, causing a small car accident that makes someone late for work, which means that they don't get a promotion so they can't leave with their children out of town. It always acts slowly, confidently, and with purpose. If the characters can find a way to communicate with Shrewton, it is easy going and takes long, thoughtful breaths between every sentence. It does nothing in haste, for it has the patience of eons.

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 3, Empathy 2, Expression 2, Leadership 3, Primal Urge 1

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Survival 2

Knowledges: Enigmas 1, Investigation, Law 1, Medicine 2, Occult 3

Powers: Aura of Tranquility, Curse of Gaia, Lord of the Land

Geas: Let the children dream.

Gnosis: 5; **Willpower:** 3

Plot Hooks

- Something has changed in the delicate balance of dreams and dream spirits that hover around Shrewton. Nightmares and bad dreams run roughshod over their more peaceful spirit siblings, and as a result, the children of Shrewton are having a hard time sleeping. This is against the Kami's very being, and it sends out a powerful cry, reaching out far and wide to find Gaia's champions that they might find the cause of the imbalance and fix it.

- An adult of Shrewton, a friend of one of the pack-mates, is trying to leave. She wants to take her son with her, but she's facing bizarre coincidences that conspire to keep her from leaving. She's had it rough and the character grows suspicious after hearing her tale. A quick visit to the village will tell the characters that the place is special. Getting in touch with the Kami, especially if they don't know what such a being is, will be tricky. Trickier still is convincing it to let the child go. Shrewton is single-minded, but not unreasonable. If the pack can bring the Kami as

many dreams as the child would produce in a lifetime, or another strong dream producer, it may be willing to bargain.

- Shrewton's population is getting old. So much so that the Kami isn't sure if it can maintain its dream production for more than another generation or two. It moves too slow, and it is afraid to fix its situation, and so has put out

messages begging for help from any of Gaia's children. If the pack can somehow help Shrewton, it will allow them to take a nearby caern, not to mention all sorts of other boons from the giant Kami. But the Kami asks a mighty deed, one that will require the pack to be creative and to perform some feats that many Garou would never consider.



UMBRA

THE VELVET SHADOW

Beyond the Material

Only foolish werewolves believe that they can win the war against the Wyrms in the physical world alone. Some use the Penumbra as a shortcut, a staging ground, or as a way to set traps for spiritually-aware foes. Others take Moon Bridges to the Realms of the Near Umbra, seeking powerful spirit magics or a concentration of the Wyrms' forces headed to attack Gaia. Some cross into different spirit worlds again, hoping to find some undiscovered lore that might turn the tide in their favor. And a few werewolves whisper of the existence of creatures blessed by Gaia herself, giving of Herself to stave off the Wyrms' corruption.

The World's Reflection

This book presents the spirit world of the Umbra as seen and understood by the Garou and their fellow shapeshifters, providing players and Storytellers both with new information about the various spirit worlds. It includes a detailed look at the animistic Umbra as the werewolves know it, with new information on the Penumbra and the Realms. Storytellers can use the information on the Astral and Dark Umbrae – in both the Penumbra and the spirit world itself – to present unfamiliar spirit worlds that bring new challenges to the Garou. The book also contains details on the Kami, creatures and places possessed by the energies of Gaia herself.

Umbra: Velvet Shadow contains:

- A detailed look at the Penumbra, the major Realms of the Near Umbra, and the Astral and Dark Umbrae.
- New information on the animistic spirits of the Near Umbra, including plenty of new spirits to liven up the spirit world.
- New lore and systems for the Kami, chosen of Gaia, and a host of example chosen.

