

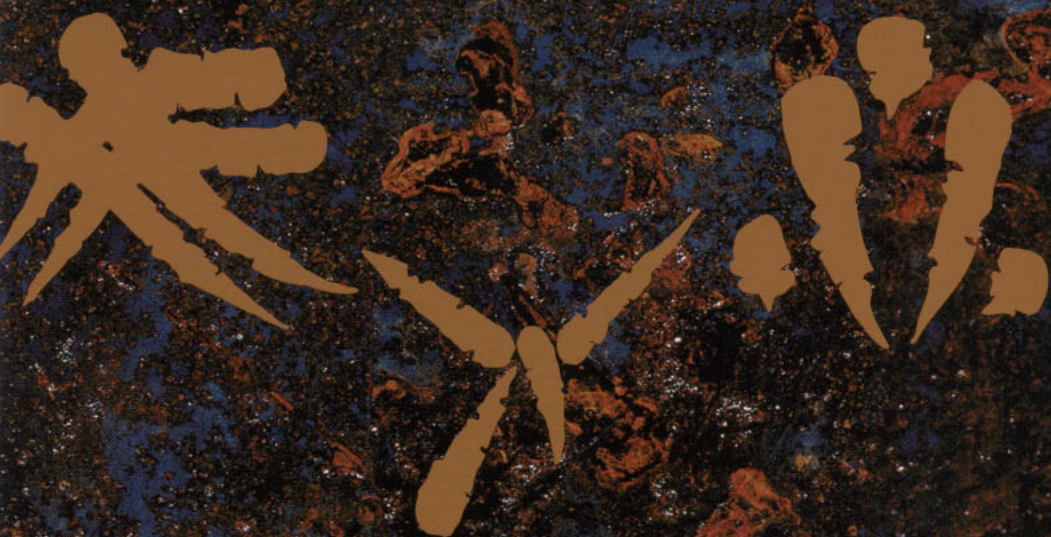
Mind's Eye Theatre

LAW S

of the

Wild

CHANGING BREEDS: I



A Supplement for playing Nuwisha,
Corax and Bastet

WEREWOLF

THE APOCALYPSE

Mind's Eye Theatre LAW S



Wild

CHANGING BREEDS: I

A Thousand Eyes in the Night

The Garou are not Gaia's only children. Gaia is mother to tricksters, heralds and hoarders of secrets — the Nuwisha, the Corax, the Bastet. While the proud werewolves strut and preen about their place as Gaia's protectors, the wise do so with an eye to the shadows. From the coyotes who make the proud stumble and the talkative ravens who carry news far and wide, to the secretive cats who call upon stranger powers, the wise know they are not alone in the night.

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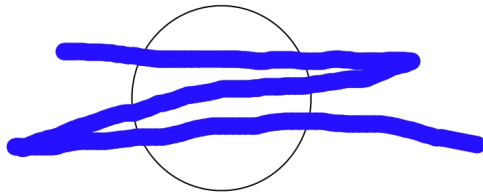
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A Chaos Release

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Written by: Peter Woodworth

Developed by: Cynthia Summers

Edited by: James Stewart

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Art Director: Aaron Voss

Layout & Typesetting by: Aaron Voss

Art by: Laura Robles

Front & Back Cover Design: Aaron Voss, Becky Jollensten

Playtesters: Randi-Jo "Pixie" Bruner-Shuford, Christopher Hooker, Matthew I. Hooper, Anthony K. Perry, Paul Shuford, Becky Terrell



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By Way of Introduction

Here in your eager hands is the first book of the Changing Breeds for Mind's Eye Theatre. Here you'll find your favorite sneaks and tricksters — the Nuwisha, the Corax and the Bastet. Here you'll find exciting new Gifts, Merits and other nifty things to make these characters come alive. Here you'll also find a note that says "See **Laws of the Wild**."

It's an inevitability when putting together a supplemental book that something gets dropped on the way due to space and other considerations. In this case, there's a number of effects that are identical to Garou Gifts, and we figured it would be a bigger bang for the buck to have entirely new material here, rather than yet another rehash of a Gift or character creation you can find in a book you probably already have.

So, if you want to get the most out of this, you'll need **Laws of the Wild** to assist with basic character creation, definitions of some Gifts and a glance at some of the cosmology. Chalk it up to those sneaky critters, who decided the best way to hide secrets was to make others go looking for them.





Nuwisha

The Children of Coyote

Hey! Wait up a minute! Don't worry — I'm here to help. Look, I know some really weird stuff has happened to you in the past couple days, and I'm here to let you know that you're not going crazy; matter of fact, you might just be sane for the first time in your life. Sounds a little bizarre? No worries. For the time being, just understand this: You're finally who you were truly meant to be. You — we — are Nuwisha, Coyote's Children, the greatest teachers and tricksters on both sides of the stars. Look me in the eye — in your heart, you can *feel* what I'm saying is true, even if the names are strange to you now. Who am I? Among our kind I go by Xochipilli Laughs-At-Death, but plain old Laughs suits me too. What's Xochipilli? Hah! That's a story I'll have to tell a little bit later.

We've got a lot of stuff to cover, but as you'll find out, most of what we coyotes learn we learn on our own, and it doesn't always quite fit with what another Nuwisha might tell you. So if this account seems a little short, don't worry — the details are yours to fill in, cross out or otherwise play with as you see fit. Sound like fun? I thought so too, even though I didn't quite understand it when my teacher told me. Now, come sit next to me for a spell — it's high time you learned a little about where you came from and what you're supposed to do now. Hear now the tale of the First Times, and what has become of the world since then.

The Very First Joke: Reality!

Coyote was the first being. He was happy for a time, but he quickly became bored, and so he sang the world into existence, from the tiniest seed



to the largest mountain. As he sang, the other animals came down from the stars to listen, and when they saw the shining world Coyote had created, more and more of them came to live there, until it was the only home most had ever known. That's why music is so enchanting to us, by the way — the best of it captures a hint of the original song that called everything into being, and when you hear that it just transports you. Anyway, Coyote was very proud of what he had created, and so he showed it off to Luna, the beautiful goddess who watched over the world at night.

Luna was mad at him, though, because all the creatures that had been living with her had gone to the land Coyote had fashioned, and she refused to see him. Coyote pleaded and argued with her to come out once more, but her mind was made up. Saddened, Coyote began to sing her praises instead, and Luna was so captivated by his song that she came and gazed down on the world once more. And even to this day, Coyote sings his praises to Luna every night, and we do the same. Sometimes she is happy, and shows her face to the world, but sometimes she remembers what Coyote did and refuses to come out at all. I guess that's the way things go, but it's not a bad lot really.

That's also why Luna won't kiss our kind as she does the wolves and the other changers — she looks at us and sees Coyote's face smiling back at her and can't quite bring herself to give us her blessing. Perhaps someday she'll forgive Coyote, but for now, we walk under Trickster's shadow alone, and don't need either the Sun or the Moon to guide us. Fortunately, Trickster loves us more than anything, and so we don't really need anyone else's help.

(Yes, Coyote and Trickster are one and the same — while Trickster has many faces and we pay homage to each in kind, he took the name of Coyote first, so we honor and emulate it most of all. Hey, don't feel dumb — most cubs ask the same question. I know I did!)

Coyote Pranks Brother Worm

One nice thing about us Nuwisha is that we don't mind making mistakes; you learn some of the best things that way. A lot of the other changers get very upset if you even hint that they made a mistake — as if Gaia had made a perfect engine in them! — and if you imply that their totem might have once been wrong, well, you had better be ready to run. This isn't so with us, though. We laugh at Coyote's flaws all the time; it's only fair, really, because Coyote doesn't hesitate to laugh at the mistakes we make. And so it is with another story of the early days, and how Coyote and Worm came to be enemies forever.

Soon after humans were created, other creatures came to Coyote and begged him to undo what he had done; these apes were ruining everything, they said, and had no sense of how to live properly. So Coyote let each animal take some humans away with them, and this is how Wolf, Cat, Bear and the others came to have changing families of their own, from this desire to teach the humans according to their own ideas. Coyote even let some other night creatures steal away humans too, although we would never tell this to any of the other changers, for it would upset many of them past the point of



reasonableness and make it even harder to teach them. (This is why many of the faeries and other magical beings of the world are our allies to this day, however, because they still honor the debt they owe, even if they do not quite remember it.) When Worm finally came to claim his share of the humans, however, there were none left, and Worm became upset and asked Coyote what he should do. Seeing that Spider had many children in her web, Coyote told Worm to go ask her if he could have some of hers.

Now Coyote knew this wouldn't work, for Spider was meticulous and had plans for all of her children, and Worm was greedy and would never be happy no matter how many people he had, but that didn't matter. Coyote believed they could both learn a lesson from it, and so he allowed Worm to make his request. And it went as he had foreseen: Spider told Worm he could climb her web and grab as many humans as he wanted, but when Worm had climbed high and taken a great number of people, he found he couldn't get free. Spider had trapped him in her web, and the harder he struggled, the more tightly he was bound. Coyote laughed and asked him if he wanted help, but Worm was proud as well as greedy, and yelled at Coyote to go away. He remains in the web to this day, and it is his thrashing that upsets the world and turns the tools Spider makes into weapons of destruction. Maybe he'll leave the web someday, if he really wants to, but first Worm must learn the lesson of humility (and Spider must learn that not everything belongs in her web), but both of them are very stubborn, and so the learning may take a long time indeed.

So was Coyote right to do what he did? Most would say no, but they do not understand the Nuwisha. True, Coyote's scheme led Worm to the entrapment which has created the dire state of the world today, and perhaps it was a mistake if he knew the world would get this way; but at the same time if he had not tricked the two of them in some fashion, neither Worm nor Spider would ever have had a chance to learn about their failings, and that is something Coyote cannot abide. What do we say about it? I told you we laugh with Coyote often, and this is one of the tales we remember in order to keep him humble. Don't worry — soon he'll have enough stories about you to return the favor.

Trickster's Vision

Before long, however, the humans who had been dropped from the web during Worm's struggles began spreading across the world, and where they went they caused harm, for they were as greedy and cruel as Worm himself. A kind of insanity caught hold of Worm as well, and he became what we know as the Wyrn: an entity who has forgotten his original purpose in the universe and now seeks only its destruction. The chosen children of the other animals tried to deal with this new threat as best they could, but all too often their responses were clumsy and inaccurate, and cost many innocents their lives; what's more, since there were no common bonds between the many lands, many changers made the same mistakes their other brethren had already learned from simply because they had not heard about the lesson, and so even more lives were lost through



needless repetition of old errors. Gaia cried out as the Wyrms' minions spread, and Coyote felt it was time to do something. He would not rob the humans of the freedom he had granted them, but at the same time he could not ignore the suffering of the others, so he formed a new plan.

Gathering up the cleverest beings he could find, Coyote showered them with a number of gifts, so they could teach lessons and pull pranks in a bunch of different ways. He also gave us the ability to walk among the stars — that's our favorite gift of all, and since we were the first to do it, we have always been the stars' greatest explorers. Knowing that the humans disliked those who were different from them, Coyote disguised the Nuwisha as he scattered us around the world, so that the humans never suspected we were hiding among them. Pretty soon Nuwisha could be found all the way from the cold steppes of Russia to the jungles of the New World. Coyote also took on many different faces as he traveled, and in time the cultures he touched each came to know him in different ways: warrior, healer, creator, plotter, opener of ways — these are just a few of the masks Trickster wears, and we treasure them all. Which of them are correct? Why, all and none of them, of course! You look confused, but don't worry. It'll make sense in a while.

Anyway, once we learned to use our gifts and travel the stars well enough, Coyote came to us in a vision, and told us his plan: we were to act as the teachers of our kind, showing humans and other changers the error of their ways so that they would learn how best to resist the temptations of the Wyrms and avoid making the same mistakes over and over again. As long as the Wyrms refuse to learn the error of his ways, we are also to prank his children, the better to speed them to their next life where they can start with a clean slate. Above all, though, we were told to have fun, and that is why as hard as our lives can be, none of the Nuwisha gave a single thought to turning down Coyote's offer.

And we still haven't.

Brother Wolf Goes Mad

We love our wolf cousins, but they have always been a hot-tempered breed, and all too often they act without thinking, guided only by their pride or rage. It was just such a decision that sparked the longest-running feud in the history of the world, what the changers call the War of Rage. One day long ago, the greatest tribal leader of the wolves looked around and decided that while he had the humans cowering before him, that was not good enough: he decided the other changers should bow down to the wolves as well. So he gathered up many packs of his kind and declared war on those who would not submit to his rule. Now, we coyotes had long known that the wolves' folly would lead to some great mistake, but even we were surprised by this move, and so we acted too late to stop the bloodshed that followed. For the other changers knew their places under Gaia, so they spurned the wolves.

The war began. Oh, you cannot imagine the devastation! Whole cities of humans were destroyed, Kin were hunted down and slaughtered, and the



blood of the Changing Breeds ran thick on the battlefields. I imagine the Wyrms laughed a great deal during those dark times, for in our arrogance and thirst for blood we were doing his work for him. Never forget that, cub — even we Nuwisha are not immune to the folly that comes with warfare, and if you become too proud or too angry yourself, you will fall as well.

In their fury, the wolves pointed to our pranks and charged us with not taking the battle against the Wyrms seriously — imagine that! As usual, they failed to see the deeper lessons behind our actions, but in that case their mistake cost us dearly indeed. Spread out across the world, we never had the time to build up the kind of numbers that the wolves or even the cats had, and so when they came after us, we fell to the sheer weight of their numbers. All that saved us was our knowledge of the stars. We retreated far beyond the world for a time, where even the wisest wolves couldn't find us. There we waited until the war had passed, and even today we still uphold a law that no more of a hundred of our kind may walk the trails of the mortal world at one time, so that we never come that close to destruction again. Over the years our lessons have made us many enemies who were quite unhappy to see that we were not as extinct as they had heard, and who would love to finish the job the wolves started. As a result, most of the time we hide behind two or three disguises at once, so that our enemies never know we've been among them until long after we're gone. If they ever find out at all!

Stung by the wounds our foolish cousins gave us, we watched the world for a long time after that, stepping in occasionally to humble other changers or to prank the humans when they overstepped their bounds. Many Nuwisha still try to prank the humans into leaving their polluted cities and endless stream of comforts behind, though they're up against some tall odds these days. Some of the other changers still believed us extinct until very recently, we were so quiet, but we were determined not to allow another slaughter either. This was fortunate, for before we knew it, another War of Rage was brewing, and this time it was right in our own homeland.

The Move West

When Coyote first came to the Earth, his paws touched the soil of what we called the Pure Lands; even when the other lands of the world were falling to the blades and torches of the humans, these lands remained sacred, tended by humans and wolves who were wise to the ways of the Earth Mother. Our first Kin came from these lands, and so we treasured them long before the first ships from the Old World touched the sands here.

At first, the Europeans were nothing more than a curious distraction, with their strange customs and outlandish clothing; we enjoyed pranking their flimsy structures and prudish morals, but thought nothing else of it. Then more and more of their kind began arriving, each seeking lands of their own, and our native wolf cousins — the Wendigo, the Croatan and the Uktena — began grumbling about the greedy ways of the newcomers. We cautioned them against rash actions, figuring the newcomers would eventu-



ally get bored and return to where they had come from. This was our mistake, for we failed to see the Wyrms whispering in their ear; the wicked one had learned much about subtlety over the centuries, and caught us unprepared. Never underestimate the power of corruption, cub — most of the time it doesn't come around waving swords and guns, but rubs up right against you with a wink and a smile.

Then violence shattered the relations between the natives and the Europeans, and our wolf cousins called for blood. We counseled them not to begin a war with the wolves from beyond the sea, but they would not listen, and bloodshed began once more. We tried as hard as we could to teach both sides the folly of their ways, but they were caught up in their bloodlust and ignored our words. All we could do was protect the kibas — our sacred places, what wolves call a caern — from their clumsy attacks and help the raven-folk as they sheltered the innocents caught in between. Coyote himself came down during those days and helped us call up powerful magic so that the greatest kibas were made invisible to everyone else but us, so that their magic would not be misused by the hate-filled paws of the wolves, native or otherwise. Many such places remain hidden today, and only a few of the wisest coyotes know their locations; if you are ever chosen to know such a hiding place, guard the knowledge with your life, for it is one of the greatest honors our kind can bestow. Coyote also touched one of us, the coyote known as Laughing-Manyskins, and imbued him with great powers to turn back the invaders and battle the Wyrms. His exploits are legendary, and you'll hear more of them soon enough; still, he was only one coyote, and the Europeans eventually completed their march westward despite his best efforts and the aid of others sympathetic to our cause.

It was also during this time that we did battle with a great Wurm-beast known as the Storm Eater; while the wolves like to pretend they alone were responsible for its defeat, we know better. After all, who is responsible for protecting the stars? When it was all over and the West was "won," we took time to survey what the battles had cost: Many coyotes had been killed, and the wolves had enjoyed another feast of their own kind, but we had also managed to hide many important secrets from the wolves and their Kin, and that was what truly mattered. For if those places had been destroyed, or worse still given over to the Wyrms, we wouldn't be having this talk today, for the world would already be nothing more than ashes and memory. That's right — some of those secrets are *that* important. Remember that if you ever run across one. Laughing-Manyskins survived the West as well, and still walks the trails today; if you are very lucky and quick to laugh at yourself, you might meet him yourself one day.

Punchline: Modern Times

So where have we come to? Good question. The modern world resists our efforts at humor all too often, but we are nothing if not patient, and in recent years we have seen some results, cracks in the facade the Wyrms worked so hard



at building. The wolves say that it is hopeless, that these are the Final Days and that the humans have pushed us beyond the point of no return, but that has been their way from the beginning: Gaia help 'em, they've always been hopelessly melodramatic, the gloomy adolescents of the Changing Breeds. You're laughing? That's good! Because for all the hardships that exist these days — and there are many — and the potential things have to go catastrophically wrong, there's just as great a chance that things may go right once more. Industrialization has allowed both the Wyrms and Sister Spider to make many toys to placate their followers, but even now we're starting to see some rebellion at last, humans who've taken a step back and are wondering if toys should really be the ultimate goal of their existence. They are few, but growing in number, and we laugh harder with every one that joins, because they are the real hope for the world.

What's with that confused look? It's simple, really — you see, the Wyrms' agents are more than ready to do battle with Nuwisha, Garou (I guess I should've mentioned this before, but that's what the wolves like to call themselves) and every other type of Changing Breed; they've been fighting us since the dawn of time, after all. But throw even one mortal who simply doesn't want any part of their culture of destruction against them, and they are at a total loss. All their weapons, temptations and other foul powers slide right off that righteous spirit, and while they might find some other way to suppress one person like that, get a group of such mortals together and the Wyrms start getting really scared. There's no way to stop a force like that. And so now we do our best to make sure that besides keeping the other Breeds honest, we teach the humans along the way as well, because they can more than make up for in numbers what the supernatural creatures of the world have in strength. So remember that the next time you're tempted to disregard someone as "only human."

Into the Stars?

Oh, and one more thing — we must stop the humans from reaching the stars. For a long time the heavens were safe, guarded by many spirits and kept well out of reach of even the greatest human flying machines, but despite our best pranks, humans have finally managed to keep craft in space. We cannot allow this, for the two greatest forces behind the drive for space exploration are Pentex — the Wyrms' own corporation, which controls dozens of companies around the world — and the Technocracy, a group of human wizards who serve Spider to a suffocating degree. They seek to give numbers to the stars instead of names, thus stealing their magic from them, and then exploit them like they have with every other resource in their grasp. It may not be the humans' fault that they are being controlled this way, and we are sorry for the innocents who died from the pranks we inflicted in trying to turn humans away from the stars, but in this case we cannot allow anything to stop us, even such a terrible cost. In many ways, the race to the stars resembles the



days of the West all over again, and if that doesn't give you the shivers, cub, you haven't been paying close enough attention.

Perhaps one day the humans will seek to explore the stars without such nefarious backers, and then we will give them all the aid we can, for they will have finally matured as a race; until we can be sure about those who pull their strings, however, we must stand firm and use everything we have to keep the stars safe from humankind.

Trickster's Laws

Enough of the history lesson — you're getting restless, I can tell. Let me tell you something else, then: Trickster's Laws. What's so funny about that? What are pranks if there aren't rules that you break when you're doing them? While Trickster doesn't ask much of us, there are some things even Coyote takes seriously, and so we live as he asks us to. Disobey these laws and you've stepped out of line, even for our kind, and believe me, we'll let you know. Even if none of us ever find out, Coyote keeps a close eye on us (there aren't too many of us to watch, remember!), and if you slip through our cracks, then *he'll* deal with you. You're better off just 'fessing up to us, because while we're pretty strict with our punishments, Trickster is *creative*. Worried? Good, it'll help you remember better. Coyote's rules are just common sense anyway, and best of all, most of the time they're a lot of fun!

Let Fools Die a Fool's Death

This sounds cruel, but it's really kindness. If someone won't learn the lesson we're trying to teach him, then we leave him to the fate he deserves, no matter what it might be. Likewise, it is not our business to stop someone who sincerely wishes to take her own life, or to deny death to a person who's living in agony. Sometimes we give second chances, if we think the person's destiny merits such an exception, but just as often we turn away, and with good reason. Shielding others from the results of their own stupidity or Wyrms temptation only insulates them from the truth of their lives, and we cannot do that. If they wish to learn, fine. If not, we will not interfere one way or another. Let others wage wars or judge sinners; we are teachers, not saviors.

Teach Those Who Need Teaching a Proper Lesson

Humans invented the phrase "poetic justice," but we Nuwisha perfected it. Coyote has forbidden us to engage in acts of revenge; that doesn't mean we can't help along those who need to be taught the error of their ways, though. When you find someone like this, prank them endlessly until they see what they have done wrong, and let their own judgment do them in from there. One man I knew liked to woo women, then break their hearts, simply for his own amusement; he learned the lesson of treating women respectfully after I arranged things so that he "just happened" to be trapped with a roomful of his former mates. I wonder if he still has the limp that came with it.



Always Prank the Wyrn

All the other rules go out the window when it comes to minions of the Wyrn. They are our enemies, always have been and always will be, and though some scant few can be saved from their plight, most are beyond hope and should be pranked accordingly. Never believe the Wyrn, because he's the ultimate liar and will tell you anything to get your soul. Never befriend the Wyrn, unless you're doing it to get close enough to do some serious damage. This is a family affair for us — Wyrn scorned Coyote's help long ago, and if there's one thing we never forget, it's an insult. By doing the Wyrn harm, we honor Coyote as well.

Be Subtle

Thanks to the actions of the wolves, who once treated humans like hunters treated herds of buffalo, the humans tend to forget when they see us in our Manabozho form, or pretend they saw something else. This is a gift, since it allows us to escape many situations unremembered, but there are always some who will remember and believe in us, and cameras do not forget as people do. Also, many changers and other supernatural beings do not trust us or our lessons, and react poorly if they know we're around. For all of those reasons, act carefully, and try not to leave tracks behind — the Changing Breeds have been hunted in the past, and the last thing we need is for that to happen again.

Respect Luna

Long ago, Coyote offended Luna with his ways, and he serenades her nightly to make it up to her. As his children, we are bound to do the same.

Think, Then Act

Coyote gifted us with wits, so please use them! Again, this is usually just common sense, but you'd be surprised how many cubs think being a trickster means putting yourself in a stupid situation without thinking of a way out first! Here's some quick tips, though, in case you need some: don't tick off enemies you can't escape; don't reveal our kibas to outsiders; don't lose your temper and strike out at other changers (you'll lose, trust me — we're not built to go head-to-head with them like that); don't dice with the Wyrn and expect to come out ahead. Most of all, laugh, and teach others to find the humor in things as well — this is Coyote's greatest gift of all, and can bring us peace and joy when nothing else will.

A Coyote's Life

You've already probably got a few notions about other Nuwisha and the life we live just from listening to me, but just in case I left some stuff out, here's some other important things we coyotes value. Like most things with us, these can change a lot depending on who you ask, but at least now you have something to start with so you're not totally lost.



The First Change

Our numbers are small, and we know our own very well; this means that we almost always know when a new Nuwisha is born, and we keep track of the child until the time of the First Change draws near. One of us goes to find the cub, guide her through the First Change and teach her the Nuwisha ways, as I am doing for you now. That's about it, though — after we're sure the cub knows enough to start her new life without needlessly endangering herself, we part ways. Don't look so panicked! Coyote doesn't choose souls who can't take care of themselves, and I'm sure that even though you're worried now, in a few days you'll already be itching to get away from my company and go exploring. It's just our way, and always has been. Sometimes we watch over the cub longer, if Coyote demands it, but this hasn't happened in living memory.

Jokes

Many others mistake our love of jokes and tolerance for mistakes with an acceptance for laziness and imperfection, but that's as far from the truth as you can get. In Coyote's eyes, and thus those of us Nuwisha as well, it is better to make mistakes and create a better life (or world) from them than never take any risks at all and have one that's less than it could be. Weren't some of the best times in your life spent doing something incredibly stupid? And didn't you learn the most about love when you got your heart broken? I thought so. Understand the wisdom you gained from those experiences, and you'll understand what we Nuwisha believe in.

Oh, and always remember the difference between tricks and pranks — tricks are for friends, pranks are for enemies. Pranks are often fatal and at the very least quite debilitating, because the Wyrms' minions are better off learning in their next life than continuing to exist and spread taint in this one. Got it? Good.

Walking Among the Stars

I can see that you haven't crossed between worlds yet... but they have spoken to you, haven't they? You have stars deep in your eyes, and you keep cocking your head to one side, as if listening for something just out of hearing. Don't worry, there's nothing wrong with that; pretty soon you'll see the truth behind all the whispers you've heard in the back of your mind, and it won't seem strange at all anymore. When you smell the rich scents, touch your paws in the pure soil, throw your head back and howl up at the vast stars, it's the surest proof that we are the most blessed of all the Breeds! Coyote was first among the stars, and in his footsteps we became the first beings from Gaia to walk there as well. They have always been sacred to us, and since the first War of Rage they have been home to most of our kind as well, so we walk their trails with respect, root out Wyrms' taint wherever we find it and take care to ensure the spirits are at peace when we pass. If we can be said to be humorless about anything, it's defending the stars from those who seek to exploit their powers.



This is also one of the only times you'll find Nuwisha ready for a straightforward battle, because we're more than capable of holding our own in the spirit realms.

Don't get me wrong, though, cub; I don't want you to think it's all doom and battle out there. We love the stars, and they love us back — there we can take any shape we please, perform any tricks we like and otherwise enjoy our natures in the way Coyote originally intended. It's always fun to have a bunch of Garou chase you to the other side, then watch their faces as you turn the tables on them. So be kind to the spirits, and they'll return the favor, for we are their guardians and they respect us for it.

Rituals

Most likely, someday you'll be sneaking around among the Garou, you'll see them performing all kinds of rites and wonder to yourself: *why don't we do stuff like that?* Truth is, cub, we Nuwisha have as much need of rites as any other changers do, but for the most part, when we need to take part in something like that we simply put on our werewolf faces and sneak into one of their ceremonies. Easier than finding a spot of our own, and besides their numbers make it less likely anyone will jump us halfway through the ritual. Sure, you'll get caught once in a while, but that's what Coyote gave you good brains and fast legs for, right? Of course, we have rituals of our own as well, secrets only coyotes know, and when you get invited to one of those, don't ever turn it down, not for *anything*. I've said before that Coyote doesn't ask much of us, and we're grateful for that; since our rituals honor and strengthen Coyote, then, it is the least we can do to perform them. For without such rituals, Coyote would weaken, perhaps even die, and then where would we be? Don't be afraid — rites are meant to be joyous. So when you are called to one, go with a light heart — you will be better for it.

Festivals

Few as we are, we Nuwisha don't gather often — such events make tempting targets for our enemies and keep us from performing our duties besides — but we are a close family and miss each other when we are apart too long. Therefore, once a year we hold a Festival, where all Nuwisha gather and rejoice in each other's company. It's always held on the winter solstice, at the place the humans call the dwellings of the Anasazi, and always held in the spirit world, where Coyote is close to us. Before everyone arrives, the site is shrouded and consecrated, so that no one but Nuwisha may find it, not even the spirits; indeed, no one else is allowed to attend, not even Kin, and those caught spying on the Festival are killed in as inventive a manner as we can think of. What's that look for? These gatherings are the closest we have to a true community, and we will not allow anyone to intrude, no matter what. Violence against other coyotes is forbidden, though, on the pain of your own life — we gather to speak of how we enjoy life, not to find ways to end it.



So what happens at the Festival? It's fantastic! We tell stories, sing songs, teach Gifts, award Rank, dance our hearts out and otherwise celebrate what it is to be Nuwisha. Every year there is a tall tale contest, with the stories growing more and more fantastic as they go around the circle until the elders award the cleverest, funniest coyote a great prize. Then, as the fires begin to die down, we gather and begin the most powerful rites of all....

You want to know what they are? Well, you'll just have to come and find out, won't you?

Gaia's Other Children

The Changing Breeds

Don't worry, the lesson's almost over. Before you go off and get some sleep — don't lie, I can see your eyelids dropping even now — you need to know about the others who walk the night trails. It's hard to imagine now, but we've learned of all sorts of strange things, from spider-people to the trusted raven folk and back again, and if you're clever you'll see them for yourself one day. Since they have their own customs and ways, however, it's best to know a little about them, so that you don't find out the hard way which ones like us and which ones like us for dinner.

Ananasi — Spider's Children are nearly as clever as their mother when it comes to making plans and snaring foes, but they are dangerously cold in their work and have a fondness for blood that we find most unsettling. Those of us who follow Ti Malice find them fascinating and might even befriend one or two; the rest of us admire their efforts, but from a safe distance. Should you meet one, be polite, but watch your step — you never know where their webs might be hidden.

Bastet — Solitary folks, like us, and very self-sufficient, which we can also relate to. They are a bit high-strung, though, and absolutely hate anything that gets them dirty, physically or otherwise, so trick them at your own risk. They have tempers as hot as any of the wolves, and if you slight one you'll be paying for it quickly. On the plus side, if you can actually make friends with one, you've got a passionate and curious soul in your corner, and better yet one who understands when you just have to be left alone. Judge them as you meet them, and understand that each breed of cat will react to you differently.

Corax — Anyone who flies with Raven is a friend to us; his children are a bit too obsessed with digging up information to trade with each other, but they share our trickster spirit and help us explore places in the spirit world even we have trouble reaching. (Wings and all that, you know.) Even more helpful, they know when to act and when to wait it out, which is more than I can say for just about any of the other changers. Bring some good gossip and a shiny object or two when you go to meet one, and you'll have made a friend before you know it.



Garou — Such a puzzle. We love our wolf cousins, for they are closest to us of all the changers, but at the same time they are always angry and making many mistakes, which causes needless suffering for countless other lives, including ours. Some of them — the Silent Striders, the Stargazers and the Uktena in particular — understand what it is we do, and for this we are grateful; there's a reason why they are the wisest wolves in the ways of the spirit worlds! Most of the others, however, seem to have skulls specifically designed to deflect learning of any kind, though we've been trying since time began. And even the ones who seem to understand us have a way of turning violent that we find unpleasant, so we can't share their company for long. Teach them what they'll learn, make friends where you can (and run fast if you can't!), and make sure they don't go anywhere they aren't supposed to in the spirit worlds.

Gurahl — Wise and patient, always willing to help, Bear's Children are some of our oldest friends, the big brothers and sisters we can turn to when we're in over our heads. All they require in return is that we help them defend their kibas when they ask, which we're glad enough to do. Watch out for their tempers, though — an angry Gurahl can twist a full-grown Garou into a furry, bloody knot, and don't think it hasn't been done before! So it's best to just stay on their good sides.

Kitsune — We hear that the lands of Asia are served by foxes who act much as we do, tricking the servants of evil into folly and fighting to protect the spirit worlds. I've never met one of them myself, but I'd certainly like to one day!

Mokolé — We don't bother them, and they don't bother us. Their memories are long, and they struggle under the burden of so many sorrows and the loss of their own kind. Without our sense of humor, I'm not sure if they would carry on at all. Come when they call, lighten their moods as they require and always pay attention when they talk to you.

Nagah — Clever snakes, who have tricked the others into believing them gone forever. We're not so easily fooled, but we still don't know much about them, save that they are the deadliest of fighters and don't care much for mammals like us. The first coyote to walk among them and live to tell of it will earn much for it, but it's a terrible risk indeed.

Ratkin — Rats are devious opportunists who will use any means at their disposal to get ahead, and once kept humans under control until the Garou killed them and tried to take their place. They are bitter for the loss and eager for revenge, so be careful around them, as you might be mistaken for one of the wolves by their blades. On the other hand, they have never swerved far from Rat's purpose for them, and in that way they are honest to their natures like few others have been.

Rokea — Ugh. Many have fallen to the Wyrn, always eating and destroying, but what can we do? The very situations they endure daily would kill us in hours, and for that they have our respect. Otherwise, stay far away from them when you're not pulling a trick, and remember to keep your hands in the boat.



Others in the Night

That's not all, cub. There are many other things out there, night creatures who roam the face of Gaia pursuing their own agendas. Some are good, some are wicked; most are simply people, with a bit of both mixed in. Remember that as you come across them, and always watch your back, for they are not like us and very few of them have a problem eliminating us if their needs require it.

Vampires — The walking dead are nothing more than parasites, creatures of the Wyrms one and all. Even the good ones steal life to survive, and there are very, very few good ones. Fortunately, they tend to have huge egos and build really big, intricate plans that can be toppled with just a clever move or two. But watch out — they have all the time in the world to get even if you leave them around in the wake of your prank.

Wizards — Mortals with the power to command the nature of reality itself, in one way or another. Some of them respect the ways of Gaia, and that's good, but most are simply insane, and dealing with them is dangerous no matter what. Reality does not like to be played with and tends to exact revenge on them (and those around them) at the worst possible time. Beware most of all the wizards of the Technocracy, who despise disorder and seek to name everything in the world; they will not hesitate to destroy us on their path to the stars.

Faeries — Of all the other creatures in the world, they are closest to us: they fight for their dreams and refuse to surrender to this soulless modern world. True, they argue among themselves too much — it's their human side coming out, I'm sure — and they are hard for outsiders to find, but when you do come across them, they're a joy to behold. They understand the value of tricks, and most laugh at themselves better than anyone we know. What's more, Trickster has recently revived his Puck aspect, which had lain dormant for centuries; could this mean that some new bond with the faeries is on the horizon? It wouldn't be the first time Trickster has enjoyed himself like this....

Ghosts — Pity the spirits of the dead, for they are lost and without purpose. They are afraid of what mysteries lie beyond and unwilling to let go of the lives they've already lost. Help them to let go of this plane, and you've done them a favor. Don't trust them, though — their half-life has left them somewhat insane, and they tend to react with great passion and violence to the strangest little things.

Pentex — Perhaps our biggest enemy, Pentex embodies everything we fight against. It has helped turn what might have been a bright and promising world into the twisted, polluted landscape we see now, and it has enslaved humans with its empty promises of glory and material reward instead of simple joy and intimacy. Show no mercy in your actions, prank it at every turn and make sure it pays for all of its profits with its own blood for a change. With Coyote's help, we just might bring it crashing down for good one day; until then, throw everything you have at it.



Character Creation

Character Creation Process

- **Step One: Character Concept** — Who and what are you?
 - Choose Nature and Demeanor
 - Choose a breed (homid or latrani)
 - Note auspice (all Nuwisha are Ragabash)
- **Step Two: Select Attributes** — What are your basic capabilities?
 - Prioritize Trait Attributes (seven primary, five secondary and three tertiary)
 - Choose Traits
- **Step Three: Select Advantages** — What do you know and what can you do?
 - Choose five Abilities (latrani Nuwisha have the same Ability restrictions as lupus Garou do during character creation)
 - Choose three Basic Gifts (one each from breed, auspice and tribe)
 - Choose five Backgrounds
 - Note Renown (three Traits, in any combination)
- **Step Four: Finishing Touches** — Fill in the details.
 - Record Willpower (3)
 - Record Gnosis (determined by breed)
 - Choose Negative Traits (if any)
 - Choose pants (if any)
 - Select Merits and/or Flaws, if desired (see page 29)
 - Purchase Influences, if desired
- **Step Five: Spark of Life** — Narrative descriptions and other details.



Breeds

• **Homid:** Always something of a joker and an outsider, when your First Change came you realized that there was a deeper purpose underneath your wild and questioning ways.

Nickname: Clever Apes

Initial Gnosis: One.

Breed Gifts: (choose one) *Jam Technology, Persuasion, Smell of Man*

• **Latrani:** Raised among wild coyotes, you quickly learned the tricks of dealing with humans and animals alike, and now that you've Changed you can finally walk between both worlds for real.

Nickname: Laughing Wolves

Initial Gnosis: Three

Breed Gifts: (choose one) *Catfeet, Heightened Senses, Scent of the True*

Form

Natures and Demeanors

For complete descriptions, see **Laws of the Wild**.

Architect, Avant-Garde, Bravo, Bureaucrat, Caregiver, Competitor, Confidant, Conformist, Conriver, Critic, Cummidgeon, Deviant, Director, Explorer, Fanatic, Gallant, Gambler, Jester, Judge, Loner, Martyr, Penitent, Predator, Rebel, Reluctant Ninwisha, Reveler, Showoff, Survivor, Traditionalist, Visionary

Attributes

For complete Trait descriptions, see **Laws of the Wild**.

Physical: Athletic, Brawny, Brutal, Dexterous, Enduring, Energetic, Ferocious, Graceful, Lithe, Nimble, Quick, Resilient, Robust, Rugged, Stalwart, Steady, Tenacious, Tireless, Tough, Vigorous, Wiry

Social: Alluring, Beguiling, Charismatic, Charming, Commanding, Compassionate, Dignified, Diplomatic, Elegant, Eloquent, Empathetic, Expressive, Friendly, Genial, Gorgeous, Ingratating, Intimidating, Magnetic, Persuasive, Seductive, Witty

Mental: Alert, Attentive, Calm, Clever, Creative, Cunning, Dedicated, Determined, Discerning, Disciplined, Insightful, Intuitive, Knowledgeable, Observant, Patient, Rational, Reflective, Shrewd, Vigilant, Wily, Wise



Abilities

For complete Ability descriptions, see **Laws of the Wild**.

Animal Ken, Athletics, Brawl, Bureaucracy, Computer, Dodge, Drive, Empathy, Enigmas, Expression, Finance, Firearms, Intimidation, Investigation, Law, Leadership, Linguistics, Lore, Medicine, Meditation, Melee, Occult, Performance, Primal-Urge, Repair, Scrounge, Security, Stealth, Streetwise, Survival

Backgrounds

For complete Background descriptions, see **Laws of the Wild**.

Fetish, Influence, Kinfolk, Past Life, Rites, Totem

Renown Traits

Since all Nuwisha are Ragabash, they may select their initial three Renown Traits in any combination they desire.

Humor: *Sly, Devious, Playful, Innovative, Inspired, Original, Inventive, Subtle, Amusing, Imaginative, Resourceful, Open-Minded*

Cunning: *Clever, Crafty, Inspired, Inventive, Pragmatic, Profound, Respected, Revered, Sacred, Scholarly, Spiritual, Venerable, Wise*

Ferocity: *Bold, Brash, Brave, Courageous, Daring, Exalted, Feared, Fearless, Fierce, Glorious, Imposing, Impressive, Spirited, Superb*

Negative Traits

For complete descriptions of these Traits, see **Laws of the Wild**.

Physical Negative Traits: *Clumsy, Cowardly, Decrepit, Delicate, Docile, Flabby, Lame, Lethargic, Puny, Sickly*

Social Negative Traits: *Callous, Condescending, Dull, Naïve, Obnoxious, Paranoid, Repugnant, Shy, Tactless, Untrustworthy*

Mental Negative Traits: *Forgetful, Gullible, Ignorant, Impatient, Oblivious, Predictable, Shortsighted, Submissive, Witless*



Breeds

Upon observing the amazingly casual breeding habits of the Nuwisha, many other shapechangers have commented with a mixture of awe and disgust that the Nuwisha will mate with anything that moves. Not true — Nuwisha are perfectly willing to mate with things that don't move, too.

The werecoyotes place little to no value on the question of a particular Nuwisha's ancestry, and as such the question of breeds — a topic of great weight to most other changers — simply doesn't matter to them at all. Taking after the amorous legends of Coyote himself, most Nuwisha find nothing wrong with taking lovers wherever they travel and will cheerfully lie with any humans, coyotes even other shapechangers as suits their fancy. To the eyes of the Nuwisha, their lineage has been spread far enough over the globe that they simply consider all humans and coyotes to be their Kin — though gaining the assistance of actual Kinfolk requires purchasing the Background of the same name — and are content with that. Even after all the liaisons with other races, however, there's no sign that any dalliances have ever produced half-breed shapechangers (or none that are part Nuwisha, anyway). If in doubt, the breed of the mother determines what a child will be if the child breeds true; if not, the pup will simply be Kinfolk to both races. Storytellers take note: players who wish to cross a Nuwisha with other Changing Breeds in hopes of playing the resulting Nuwisha-Bastet super character should be told "no" as firmly as possible and whacked sharply on the nose with a pencil if they persist. Just because Coyote is amorous doesn't mean he's stupid, and introducing such a twisted creature would be folly indeed.

Finally, there are no metis werecoyotes. Nuwisha claim that their kind aren't capable of producing one, while outsiders argue that no two coyotes can stand each other's company long enough to mate. It's even possible that Nuwisha mate all the time, but don't pass on any deformities to their children as the Garou do. Whatever the case may be, if there have been metis Nuwisha, no one has ever heard of it.

Forms

Unlike their Garou cousins, Nuwisha suffer no personality change as a result of transforming — to Trickster's talented children, all states are as their original. Sure, some forms may be better suited to different tasks than others, but that's just the way it is, and most Nuwisha are very pragmatic in choosing the shape that's best for the moment rather than clinging to some silly notion of breed superiority. After all, if Coyote had really wanted you to stick to just Homid or Latrani form, then why would he bother giving you all those other fun shapes to choose from?

Homid

Identical to any other person, except Nuwisha tend to be leaner and more wiry than most people, and even their eldest rarely carry much fat on them.



While many are still descended from the Pure Ones, the casual breeding habits of werecoyotes mean that Nuwisha of all races and descriptions now exist. Laughter's traces are the most telling feature of Coyote's ancestry — all Nuwisha have pleasant laughs and very engaging grins with laugh lines that begin appearing quite young and deepen quickly with age. Many Nuwisha even smile when they're angry or upset, though at such times the humor dies behind their eyes, their laughter turns cold and their smile sharpens into a predator's deadly grin.

Tsitsu

Almost identical changes as the Glabro form of the Garou, except a Tsitsu is much more human in appearance; the Nuwisha can pass easily among humans, although those who know him will definitely notice something amiss. Bulk doubles in this form, and the Nuwisha can still speak normally, although his voice is likely to be much deeper than normal. Some Nuwisha take this shape when entering strange territory, just to take advantage of the extra protection and intimidation it offers.

Manabozho

Brutish and efficient, this form stands seven or eight feet tall, increasing bulk and weight of the Homid form by about one and a half again. While not quite the muscular powerhouse that the Garou war form is, the Nuwisha make up for that with extra speed and agility, an important edge for a people who always seem to be outrunning one outraged party or another. Ever the loquacious ones, Nuwisha can still speak normally in this form, but their voices are very deep and carry a slight growling undertone that makes even pleasant small talk sound rather menacing.

Trait Adjustments for Shapeshifting

Nuwisha cause a Delirium reaction in onlookers when in Manabozho and Sendeh forms, but due to the small role they played in the Impergium, all onlookers are treated as being two steps higher on the Delirium chart.

Homid: None

Tsitsu: *Vigorous, Wiry, Nimble.* He also gains the Negative Trait *Tactless*

Manabozho: *Quick x 2, Nimble x 2, Wiry, Rugged, Energetic.* He also gains the Negative Traits *Bestial x 2* and *Tactless*

Sendeh: *Quick x 2, Nimble, Energetic, Tireless, Wiry.* He also gains the Negative Traits *Bestial x 2* and *Impatient*

Latrani: The Nuwisha gains the following Traits: *Quick, Lithe, Rugged.* He also gains the Negative Trait *Bestial*



Sendeh

Easily mistaken for red wolves in this form, Nuwisha often take advantage of this resemblance to hide among packs of wild wolves. Their weight is identical to that of their Homid form. While the Nuwisha can no longer use human speech, he can still easily imitate the sounds of a human laughing, screaming or crying, a talent that is quickly exploited to the fullest by the clever coyotes. Sendeh may converse with both wolves and coyotes in this form.

Latrani

The Latrani form is indistinguishable from a regular coyote, and the character's weight decreases and generally becomes much more lean and wiry. Nuwisha in this form may still speak easily with both wolves and coyotes; they are brothers, after all. A coyote's howl is higher pitched than that of a wolf but no less audible.

Laughing at the World

There are no other shapechangers in the world quite like the Nuwisha — and they like it that way! Trickster built his favorite children to be contrary by nature: what kills other changers in seconds fails to scratch them. They keep their wits through situations that send their cousins into mindless outbursts. They look to the stars while the others keep their eyes on the ground. They laugh when others rage and cry. Indeed, Nuwisha do nothing if not live life in their own style, and if the others don't understand that, well, that's their problem. To that end, Trickster has granted his playful ones a number of unique advantages.

This is not to say that the Nuwisha are entirely different from their fellow shapeshifters: they still regenerate, change shape, step sideways and draw Gnosis from the natural world like their cousins do; see the appropriate sections of **Laws of the Wild** for rules on those particular systems.

Trickster's Blessing

Trickster's greatest gift to his children is their ability to laugh at what others find serious; in times of their greatest need, Coyote grants his faithful children the ability to defy the laws of reality. Thus, a Nuwisha might run off a cliff and fail to fall, hide behind a tree no thicker than his arm or even vanish into "thin air" (actually into the Umbra). Whatever the case, this particular quirk manifests as a chance to extricate oneself from danger — a Nuwisha may thus use some quick thinking and Trickster's Blessing to call for a Fair Escape, which usually cannot be followed or otherwise defeated. Of course, if the Nuwisha is caught later on, he'll have to make his own luck. Note that the actual effect is narrative — the only game effect is the ability to call a Fair Escape.

This power is potentially easy to abuse and should only be used once per session (if even that often). Nuwisha who try to rely on it too much to save



their hides might find it fails them at inopportune times, or that Coyote requires some great service in exchange for granting it. After all, Trickster only does so much for his children — they're supposed to get by on their own.

Coyote's Many Skins

Just because Nuwisha don't have Rage doesn't mean they are helpless when shifting forms — after all, Coyote is famous for his ability with disguises, and switching skins has been a trick of the clever ones for millennia. Due to the natural familiarity that all coyotes have with their different shapes, shapeshifting takes half as long for a Nuwisha as it would for a Garou, rounded down. This is instinctual knowledge that comes automatically with the First Change and is one of the main reasons most Nuwisha have a far less traumatic transition to their new life than other shapechangers. And while they cannot instantly switch forms as Garou can with Rage (at least without purchasing some sort of Merit or Gift that allows them to do so), in general Nuwisha are much more adept at shapeshifting, not to mention more comfortable in the shapes they choose to take.

Laughter's Toll

The life of a trickster isn't always as romantic as it sounds — many beings take great offense at the efforts of a Nuwisha who tries to teach them the error of their ways, and even those who learn the lesson don't always forgive their teacher. Nuwisha are also solitary beings and most seldom see each other apart from Festival times; combined with their wandering habits, this can make for a lonely existence, and if not for the great joy that Coyote planted deep within the hearts of his children, they might not have lasted as long as they have. As it is, all Nuwisha bear certain marks from this existence, recorded below.

Luna's Cold Shoulder

As the legends say, one of the pranks the Nuwisha performed long ago deeply offended Luna. Despite countless years of pleading, she remains indifferent to their entreaties. Due to this separation, all Nuwisha are considered Ragabash, and they are denied the Rage of Luna as well — Nuwisha start with no Rage Traits and can never gain any. This makes them immune to both berserk and fox frenzy, but they also lose the extra speed and power Rage offers, putting them at a serious disadvantage when battling other changers and many types of Wyrms-creatures. Any Gifts or other supernatural powers that cause frenzy can still work, however — the Nuwisha have a spark of that same primal nature, however far down it is buried.

There is one bright side to this — their disconnection from Luna also grants them immunity to silver. Silver weapons still harm them, of course, but do not inflict aggravated damage, and the Nuwisha may use his full Traits when testing against opponents with silver.



Coyote's Folly

Even the greatest tricksters sometimes go too far, mocking what should remain sacred or losing sight of what truly matters in favor of a jest. Most believe that this flaw is the origin of Luna's anger at the Nuwisha, and even today individual werecoyotes often get too caught up in their pranks for their own good. A Nuwisha must either spend a Willpower Trait or win a Willpower Test (against six Traits) any time he wishes to avoid finishing a prank he has started. This is likewise required for the Nuwisha to avoid the urge to retaliate with a greater prank when someone successfully dupes him. This can be very distracting when the Nuwisha has some other purpose that they should be tending to, and downright dangerous if the target is very powerful or otherwise not an excellent person to make an enemy out of.

Jester's Reputation

"No one likes a comedian," or so the saying goes; this is especially true when the comedian in question is as good at pointing out the character flaws and foolish ways of others as the average Nuwisha. Since the targets of their attention are nine feet tall with hair-trigger tempers and homicidal tendencies, who absolutely *hate* being reminded of their little foibles, the reputation that often emerges about the Nuwisha is colorful at best, downright hateful at worst. What's more, even those blessed changers who appreciate what the Nuwisha do aren't crazy enough to trust them. All Nuwisha have the permanent Negative Social Trait *Untrustworthy*, which may be called by anyone who knows their true nature.

Abilities

Most Nuwisha tend to choose Abilities that allow them to teach in their own particular style — a warrior of Loki tends to have several levels of *Brawl*, *Dodge* and *Melee*, for example, while a follower of Ti Malice tends to focus more on Social Abilities such as *Subterfuge* and *Intimidation*, and one of Kishijoten's chosen might take a few levels of *Medicine* and *Empathy*. In addition, most Nuwisha have at least one level of *Survival* or *Streetwise*, reflecting the fact that they are used to traveling alone and looking after themselves. Of course, these recommendations are generalizations of the roughest kind — a Loki might well choose a different approach than his fellows, while a follower of Kishijoten might take on the role of a "combat medic." Indeed, being the tricksters and loners that they are, the best rule about the coyotes is that there are no generalizations that can be made!

As noted before, latrani Nuwisha have the same Ability restrictions as lupus Garou during character creation. Attuned as they are to their different shapes, homid Nuwisha may take the *Primal Urge* Ability, although they cannot take more than two levels of it when play begins.



Backgrounds

Nuwisha are forbidden to take the Background *Pure Breed*, as Coyote's casual breeding habits have hopelessly mingled the tribe's bloodlines over time. Fortunately, the Nuwisha really don't care — they see such a diverse heritage as a strength, not a weakness, and frequently make fun of those other changers who put great stock in their ancestral lines (usually with explosive results). Many Nuwisha are well versed in *Rites*, however, and more than a few have a *Fetish* of some kind or another, reflecting the aptitude for spirit ways that the coyotes are known for. *Totem* is also very important to the Nuwisha, for what face of Trickster a coyote follows frequently determines his response to the foolishness and corruption around him, and those Nuwisha that do not have a *Totem* usually gain one as soon as possible. Very few Nuwisha have strong ties of *Kinfolk* or *Influence*, as they do not put down roots for very long, but those that do tend to have close-knit networks that are far more trustworthy than most such power structures.

Aside from *Pure Breed*, Nuwisha may begin play with any Backgrounds, subject as always to Storyteller approval.

Merits and Flaws

These Traits represent certain special talents or frailties that a particular Nuwisha has and should be used to create interesting and complex characters, not to apply arcane number formulas in hopes of generating some kind of mythical Ultimate Trickster. Nuwisha are free to choose the Merits and Flaws from *Laws of the Wild* with a few exceptions: Nuwisha may not take any Traits that relate to lunar ties, silver tolerance, Rage, frenzy, or the pack mentality; in addition, Nuwisha may not take any Traits from the Garou Ties category or Traits that recreate Garou Tribal Advantages or Drawbacks (obviously). If in doubt, consult the Narrator and use common sense about which Traits can be purchased.

In addition, the following Merits and Flaws are unique to the Nuwisha.

Large (1 Trait Physical Merit)

Most Nuwisha lack the sheer size and muscle mass of their Garou cousins, a dead giveaway in Crinos form, but coyotes with this Merit are substantially larger than most of their relatives, and can easily pass as Garou in Manabozho form. This doesn't offer any physical advantage, but helps with disguises and puts the Nuwisha one Trait up on all Social Tests with Garou due to the respect it earns him.

Umbral Affinity (2 or 3 Trait Supernatural Merit)

All Nuwisha enjoy a strong tie to the spiritual world, but with this Merit the Gauntlet becomes almost as nothing to them — all difficulties for stepping sideways or otherwise passing through the Gauntlet are reduced by two, to a minimum of three. With the three-Trait version of this Merit, the



Nuwisha also doesn't need a reflective surface to step sideways, just a moment of concentration.

Favored by Coyote (6 Trait Supernatural Merit)

Blessed by Trickster from birth, the Nuwisha doesn't spend Gnosis Traits on any Gift that is *directly* used to perform a trick; this doesn't mean that the character never spends Gnosis, only that he doesn't need to consider the Gnosis cost when pulling a fast one on an opponent. (Note: This Merit reads "pulling a fast one," not "annihilating an opponent" or "escaping every dangerous situation.") Indeed, as this Merit is potentially easy to abuse, the Storyteller may limit what Gifts it applies to or even forbid it outright, so players should consult the Storyteller before taking this Merit.

Bad Moon (2 Trait Supernatural Flaw)

Luna has never forgiven the Nuwisha for their ancient prank, and sometimes she actively looks to make their lives difficult; this Flaw is one such instance. Coyotes with this affliction have the same personality inclinations as a Garou born under their phase of the moon but gains none of the benefits of that auspice. Thus a Nuwisha born under a full moon has an Ahroun temper, but no Rage to back it up, while a "Philodox" coyote drives her fellow tricksters crazy with her analytical tendencies. Needless to say, this can make for some strained relations with the Nuwisha's more relaxed prankster kin. Obviously, Nuwisha born under the new moon — as they are already Ragabash by nature — cannot take this Flaw.

Overly Curious (3 Trait Psychological Flaw)

Like their Bastet cousins, many Nuwisha are entirely too curious for their own good and simply cannot let a mystery lie uninvestigated. Whether it's seeing where a mysterious noise in the night came from or what's behind the locked door in the vampire elder's haven, the Nuwisha cannot resist checking out the unexplained. In game terms, whenever a mystery of some kind presents itself, you must make a Willpower Challenge; failure means that you'll go out of your way — *really* out of your way — to uncover the answer. The difficulty of this test depends on how much work it looks like you'll have to do; the simpler the mystery appears, the harder the test will be. Note the emphasis on "appears" — many great mysteries begin from something that seems quite simple in the beginning!

Harano (4 Trait Psychological Flaw)

One of the most precious blessings Trickster gives to his children is their immunity to Harano, the crippling depression that afflicts many Garou and other changers. This doesn't necessarily mean that Nuwisha are always happy — one of Coyote's favorite lessons is that everyone's life has its ups and downs — but regardless of other circumstances they cannot slide into the wasting state of Harano. However, for one reason or another, the Nuwisha with this Flaw is susceptible to Harano like any other changer. This is never, ever a good thing for the Nuwisha. Note: This Flaw cannot be taken without Storyteller permission and should not be allowed unless the Storyteller believes the threat of Harano will be a significant theme in the chronicle.



Renown

As casual a society as they are, when it comes to Renown, even the Nuwisha take some things seriously. They recognize Ferocity (Glory) and Cunning (Wisdom), although those concepts are interpreted quite a bit differently among coyotes than among wolves. Nuwisha do not recognize Honor, seeing it instead as something inherent to the other types of Renown a coyote earns. In its place is the concept of Humor — how well the Nuwisha has learned to teach others, pull pranks, and even how well the coyote can laugh at himself and his own failings. Nuwisha Renown changes center primarily around the Festival, and for this reason if nothing else all coyotes make sure they attend, to judge the worthiness of their fellows and to get recognition for their own deeds. Nuwisha would no sooner miss a Festival than they would slice out their sense of humor.

Humor

Like many things with the Nuwisha, Humor Renown isn't quite what it might seem to be — a Nuwisha does not gain Humor Renown for playing gratuitous pranks on other characters or punning throughout a story, and it is *never* awarded for out-of-character humor. Rather, Humor is awarded whenever the Nuwisha teaches someone else the error of their ways, or how through their actions — often undertaken with good intentions — the target has actually been blindly playing into the Wym's hands. Humor can also be gained when a Nuwisha creatively solves a problem, pranks a foe, or even laughs at himself and his own failings. Humor can be lost if a coyote often resorts to easy or cliché solutions. Ultimately, it is a measure of the ingenuity of a Nuwisha and how well she has learned to instruct others.

As a rule of thumb, use the "locational humor index" guide for awarding Humor Renown — if you "had to be there" for an incident, it probably wasn't worth Renown. On the other hand, if the lesson or prank was memorable or amusing enough to merit retelling and appreciating, it's something worthy of Humor.

How to Make Coyote Laugh

- **Take a different view.** (If Coyote wanted the same old boring perspective, he'd have sired wolves instead. It is a trickster's role to see what others cannot or will not.)
- **Teach, even if the lesson isn't always obvious.** (Tricks are ultimately supposed to be lessons. If no one learns anything from what you've done, then what was the point?)
- **Laugh often, especially at yourself.** (Never pass up a chance to appreciate the humor in a situation, even — especially — if it might cause trouble to do so.)



Cunning

Nuwisha haven't survived for this long by being gullible stay-at-home types. Among the coyotes, Cunning is valued only a little less than Humor and is used to measure how capable the Nuwisha is at surviving situations with little more than his wits and the seat of his pants. Cunning is also a measure of how well known the Nuwisha is for his wit and his capacity for trickery. The word of a Cunning coyote carries great weight with others of his kind, and those with a high amount of this Renown are granted places of honor at tribal council fires. The enigmatic Umbral Dancers soon take note of young Nuwisha who seem particularly clever as well and frequently approach them for recruitment after the coyote has earned enough respect for his wits.

Coyotes who riddle well, dare to tell others unpleasant truths and avoid problems with sheer quick thinking earn a great deal of Cunning, while coyotes who rely on more direct methods earn less. Cunning also includes the knowledge of Umbral ways and secrets that the Nuwisha has learned — only those who have spent a good deal of time studying the spirit pathways are allowed to join the Umbral Dancers. As many Cunning schemes also net a prank or impart some insight to a target, Humor and Cunning are often awarded together, depending on the situation.

The Way of the Cunning Coyote

- **There is no dishonor in deception.** (We are tricksters. So long as your games do not serve the Wyrms, it is your place to twist the world as you see fit.)
- **Speak the truth when you can.** (This usually causes even more trouble than a whole truckload of clever lies.)
- **Study the stars and keep them safe.** (We are the last true guardians of the Umbra. Learning the ways of the stars is not only instructive, it is our sacred duty.)

Ferocity

Nuwisha aren't warriors — while they excel at clever ambushes, and some of their warriors are as fierce as any Garou, ultimately the coyotes simply cannot equal their bulkier, angrier cousins and the raw power that Rage gives them. As a result, they pick their fights carefully, and most plan their best pranks so that they can be a state or two away when it is finally revealed, to avoid any unpleasant fallout. Other changers often mistake these attitudes for cowardice, but the Nuwisha know better — they're simply being pragmatic about their odds, and they'd much rather live to prank another day than die in some pointless duel. Sometimes a trick may require a coyote to fight in order to teach a lesson of some kind, and in that case they will generally leave their foe with nothing worse than a bruised ego and dusty backside; needless killing is the province of the Garou. At the same time, if a foe leaves a Nuwisha no choice but to fight for real, they don't hesitate to use every means at their disposal to win and seldom leave those enemies alive — after all, surviving



foes have an unpleasant habit of showing up later on. Nuwisha also have a deep sense of commitment to those few things they find worth protecting, and tales of heroic coyotes facing down terrible odds to defend something important to them figure prominently in their legends.

Ferocity Renown is usually awarded on the basis of choosing fights wisely (including running from battle, as long as it was the best course of action), besting a superior foe in straightforward combat, avenging past injustices, fighting with style and defending those others who understand the Nuwisha way of life. As underdogs and outsiders themselves, many Nuwisha also see it as their place to take revenge for those who cannot — the young, the voiceless, the old, the powerless — and more than one young coyote has earned great Ferocity by taking action against callous landlords, corrupt cops and others who prey on the underclass of society.

Underdog's Wisdom

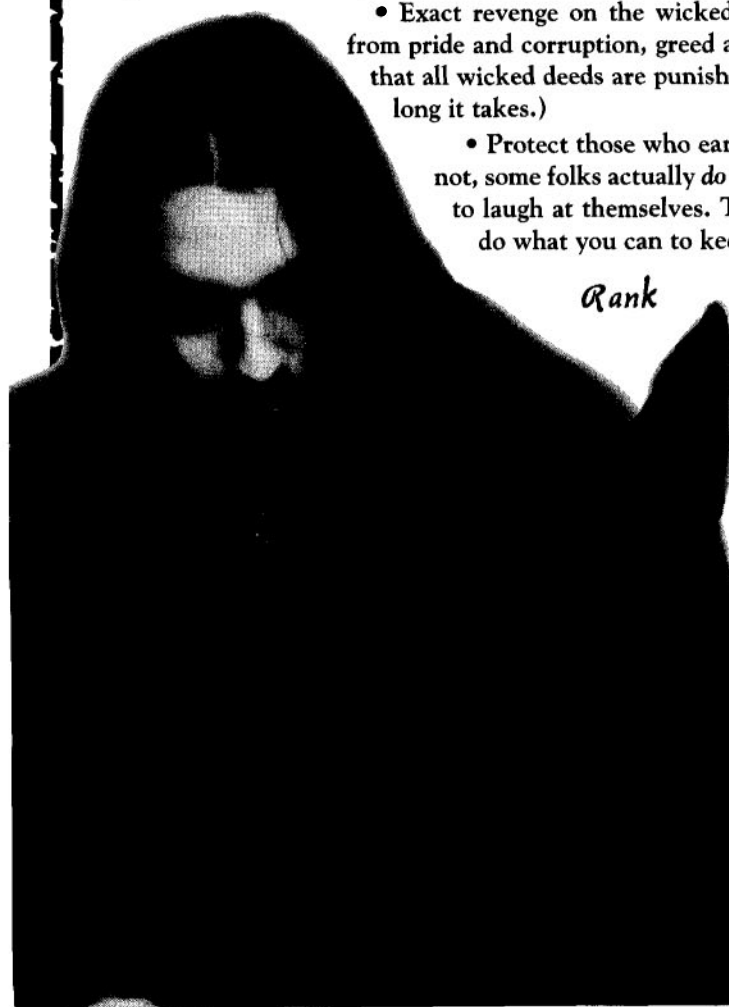
- Dead coyotes can't laugh. (Always keep one eye on the exit, and if you have to fight, do everything it takes to ensure that your opponent never gets a second shot at you.)

- Exact revenge on the wicked. (Injustice stems from pride and corruption, greed and hypocrisy. See that all wicked deeds are punished, no matter how long it takes.)

- Protect those who earn it. (Believe it or not, some folks actually *do* catch on and learn to laugh at themselves. Treasure them and do what you can to keep them safe.)

Rank

Although they choose to honor different deeds in very different ways, and have replaced Honor with Humor, in most other respects Nuwisha





gain Renown and Rank exactly as Garou do, at least in terms of game mechanics (see **Laws of the Wild**). However, there are the following exceptions:

- Nuwisha advancement is very informal. News of a particular coyote's deeds is carried by spirits and by word of mouth (reflecting most ordinary Renown gains or losses). When the time of the Festival comes, those who wish to advance to a new Rank are given a chance to petition during the tale-telling portion of the event. Assuming their stories satisfy the other Nuwisha present, the new Rank is conferred and the coyote is often taught a Gift or two as a present.

- Nuwisha cannot renounce their Renown; there's no point to doing it anyway.

- As they are all Ragabash, Nuwisha use those Renown requirements for advancing in Rank. Thus a Nuwisha needs seven Renown Traits (any combination) to advance to Rank Two, any 12 Renown Traits to advance to Rank Three, etc. They also use the following titles for their Ranks, instead of the usual Garou ones:

- Nuwisha do not tend to lose Renown very often — Trickster is a notoriously permissive spirit, after all — but the few offenses that they do consider serious can cost a Nuwisha a great deal of permanent Renown or even a Rank very quickly. Failing to uphold the sacred charge of the Nuwisha (remembering always to laugh), aiding the Wyrms, failure to teach others of their shortcomings, sharing the secrets of the Umbra with outsiders, being pranked without attempting to trick the prankster in return — all of these are considered crimes by the Nuwisha and can cost a coyote dearly in the eyes of her fellows. Most of the time the bad word of spirits or other informants serves to decrease the coyote's status (reflecting normal temporary Renown loss), although more serious charges are weighed at Festival time, with punishments decided by the vote of those present. Of course, coyotes whose reputations grow *too* dark — aiding the Wyrms, destroying fetishes, etc. — soon attract the attention of a well-armed and very unhappy group of their fellows, who will demand an *immediate* explanation from the accused and have no trouble doing what needs to be done if the Nuwisha in question is anything less than helpful and contrite.

Zero	Cub
One	Son/Daughter
Two	Brother/Sister
Three	Aunt/Uncle
Four	Father/Mother
Five	Grandfather/Grandmother
Six	Legend

Gift



Nuwisha begin with three Gifts, same as Garou. Nuwisha choose breed Gifts just as Garou do: homid Nuwisha select one homid breed Gift, and latrani pick one lupus breed Gift. All Nuwisha are Ragabash, so another Gift is selected from that category. Their tribal Gifts are selected from the pool of Gifts below; these Gifts are taught only to those cubs who prove themselves true to the Nuwisha way, and many are unique to the werecoyotes (although just as many were stolen from one of the other Changing Breeds at one time or another — Coyote is perfectly happy to let others do his work when he can). Most of their Gifts are based on trickery and are defensive by nature, but remain quite potent nonetheless.

Note: A lot has happened in the century or so since the days of the frontier struggles, and accordingly some Nuwisha Gifts have been changed to reflect this evolution; while many of these powers are still intact, players should take care to note any changes in the tests, activation costs and other requirements for each Gift as compared to their original listing in *Laws of the Wyld West*. There are fewer Nuwisha than ever on Gaia these days, but those that remain enjoy that much more of Coyote's favor, making them devious allies and dangerous enemies indeed.

Basic

Bad Joke — With a bit of inspired humor or illogic, the Nuwisha may attempt to distract a target long enough to get away. The player must tell a joke, riddle or pun *in character*, then make a Social Challenge against his target (who uses Mental Traits to defend). If the Nuwisha is successful, he may call for a Fair Escape while the target laughs, unable to help herself (or, in the case of riddles, simply stands there thoroughly confused). This Gift may also be used against a group, with normal mob scene rules. This Gift is ineffective against animals, spirits or creatures wholly consumed by the Wyrms, though most fomori and vampires are fair game. Attacking the target or otherwise interacting with her in any way automatically cancels the Gift.

Camouflage — As the Wendigo Gift; see *Laws of the Wild*.

Dance of Dionysis — By touching her target (a Physical Challenge if the target resists) and spending a Gnosis Trait, the Nuwisha may cause him to become dizzy and uncoordinated — his vision blurs, his ears ring and his speech slurs. Most observers assume that the target is drunk. The target should roleplay this state as best he can within the rules of safety; furthermore, due to the disorientation, the target is three Traits down on all Physical Tests. This Gift lasts for one turn/minute for each permanent Gnosis Trait the Nuwisha has.

Gift of the Porcupine — As the metis Gift; see *Laws of the Wild*.

New Face — Spending a Gnosis Trait and winning a Static Social Challenge against six Traits, the Nuwisha may adopt any identity — race,



gender, breed, etc. This Gift does not confer any Traits for the transformation — *looking* like a weightlifter and *being* one are very different things — and it only functions for the Nuwisha's Homid and Latrani forms. Any shapeshifting immediately marks the Nuwisha for what he is. Appropriate props, hand signals or description cards should be employed to alert other players to the Nuwisha's new appearance. This Gift lasts for one scene.

Odious Aroma — As the Bone Gnawer Gift; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Otter's Breath — As the Uktena Gift *Spirit of the Fish*; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Possum's Wisdom — This Gift allows the Nuwisha to feign the appearance of death — with the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait, her pulse stops, blinking ceases, her skin turns cold, her breathing is nonexistent. Even supernatural *Heightened Senses* have trouble piercing this disguise (the coyote is three Traits up resisting such challenges), although powers like *Aura Perception* or *Sense Vitality* test against it normally. This power lasts for up to one scene, at which time the Nuwisha must find some hot food and stretch her tensed muscles (two Traits down on all Physical Challenges until such amenities are obtained). The Nuwisha cannot use any other Gifts while feigning death, and voluntary movement of any kind dispels the illusion immediately.

Rabbit Run — As the Silent Strider Gift *Speed of Thought*; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Snake Skin — As the metis Gift *Shed*; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Song of Kokopelli — By singing or playing an instrument, the Nuwisha may cause all those in the area to be filled with a sense of calm for as long as the Nuwisha continues performing. The player must actually perform in some fashion (talent is helpful but not required) in addition to making a Social Challenge against those in hearing distance. Those who fail to resist the Gift's power cannot attack or take any other aggressive action, and those in frenzy are calmed (but only for the duration of the Gift). Use the normal mob scene rules for multiple targets.

Spirit Speech — As the Theurge Gift; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Swollen Tongue — With a touch and the expenditure of one Gnosis Trait, the Nuwisha can cause a target's tongue to swell, preventing all speech or howling. Furthermore, the target's hands begin to shake if they attempt to use sign language or gestures, rendering those attempts unintelligible as well. The effects of this Gift last for one scene or hour, whichever comes first.

Twisting Tongues — As the homid Gift *Tongues*; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Umbra Map — With this Gift, the Nuwisha can call upon his natural bond with the spirit world to locate any part of the Umbra and how best to get there; with enough effort, he may even attempt to locate a specific target. The Nuwisha must make a Gnosis Test, with a difficulty based on how familiar he is with the area he seeks to locate; success not only tells him where he is, but also how best to get to the destination he desires. In the case of finding a target,



the Nuwisha must spend a Gnosis Trait and make a Gnosis Test against the target's Mental Traits, but success tells the Nuwisha the target's exact location.

Xochipilli's Touch — With this unpredictable Gift, the Nuwisha can make a Mental Challenge to give good or bad luck to himself or his target, as he desires; by spending a Gnosis Trait, the Nuwisha may increase the luck to almost miraculous levels. The Storyteller is in *complete* control of how this luck manifests, and should be alerted whenever the Gift is used. The results should always be narrative rather than a matter of Trait bonuses or other solely mechanical benefits. Targets might win the lottery, stumble across a long-lost loved one or discover that a dire medical diagnosis was actually just a mistake; likewise, those suffering under bad luck might run out of gas, misplace a prized possession or find out that they're the target of an IRS audit. Usually this luck arrives within a minute or so, although it can also take several hours to manifest if the Nuwisha desires. This Gift may only be used once on a given target each session, and those Nuwisha who rely too much on this Gift instead of their own wits may find it fails them until they've earned Trickster's favor again. Obviously, the Storyteller should do their best to make sure game balance and Coyote's sense of humor are enforced when describing this Gift's effects — Trickster may answer a target's prayers, but always in his own fashion!

Intermediate

Blisters — This Gift causes revolting blisters to erupt from another's hide, and is a favorite Nuwisha punishment for the vain. To use this Gift, the Nuwisha must spend a Gnosis Trait and make a Social Challenge against his target; success means the target gains the Negative Social Trait *Repugnant* x 2 for the remainder of the session/day (whichever is longer), and has a one-Trait penalty on all Social Challenges related to appearance which do not involve intimidation. The blisters do not cause damage and cannot become infected, but are ugly as sin and cause fur or hair to fall out as they appear.

Dance of Abandon — This Gift causes the target to forget her troubles and simply enjoy herself for the duration of the Gift. The Nuwisha must make a Social Challenge against the target's permanent Willpower Traits; success means that the target is in her highest spirits and must celebrate for the remainder of the scene, although any attack on the target cancels this Gift immediately. Note that this Gift can easily backfire on the Nuwisha, as some people — Get of Fenris, for example — tend to celebrate very violently, and the Nuwisha has no control over how the target chooses to express her merriment.

Disappearing Act — Sometimes the best place to be is nowhere at all. Nuwisha with this Gift may spend a Trait each of Gnosis and Willpower and, by remaining absolutely still, become invisible to all forms of detection. All five senses are affected, and even supernatural powers such as *Auspex* or other



Gifts cannot locate the coyote as long as he remembers not to move. Enemies may even run into the Nuwisha and fail to notice him; the Gift even stays in effect if he is jostled or knocked over, although the coyote cannot stand up without canceling the Gift's effects. Otherwise, the Gift lasts until the Nuwisha willingly moves.

Happy Thoughts — With this Gift, the Nuwisha may rob another being of their ability to Rage for a time, which is often quite useful for defusing volatile situations or evening the odds in battle. The Nuwisha must touch her target and spend a Gnosis Trait; if successful, the target cannot spend Rage for the remainder of the scene. On the positive side, the target is also immune to the effects of silver for the duration of the Gift. Note that the target's ability to shapeshift isn't affected by this Gift — those whose Rage is blocked in this fashion haven't really "lost the wolf," but are simply incapable of using their Rage to the fullest.

Gift of Rage — Wait, did Coyote say that the Nuwisha cannot Rage? Once again Trickster proves worthy of his name, as werecoyotes with this Gift can take the same kind of extra actions and gain the other benefits of Rage that the other changers take for granted. By spending a Gnosis Trait and winning or tying a Simple Test, the Nuwisha gains three Rage Traits, which can be used and regained in all the ways Rage normally is. The effects of this Gift last for one scene, but for as long as the Nuwisha has even one Rage Trait in his body, he becomes vulnerable to silver — Trickster does not want his children to embrace hatred in any form.

Push (Umbral Danse) — A Nuwisha with this Gift may force his target into the Umbra by spending a Gnosis Trait and winning a Gnosis Challenge against the target's Willpower Traits. If successful, the target is unceremoniously dumped into the Penumbra; this isn't much of a problem to most shapeshifters, but for anyone else, things quickly get interesting indeed. Despite the name of the Gift, no actual physical contact is required, although the target must still be within 10 feet or so.

Scent of Vengeance — This devious little trick allows the Nuwisha to make another shapechanger smell the scent of an old enemy. Usually this scent issues from somewhere far off to lead the target away, although the Nuwisha may also place the scent on another target, causing all sorts of trouble for that unfortunate soul. This Gift lasts for one scene, and if used on another being, completely masks their normal odor during this time. Creating a distant scent requires a Mental Test against five Traits; placing the scent on a particular target requires that the Nuwisha touch her target and spend a Gnosis Trait, as well as making a Mental Test against seven Traits. Note that unless the Nuwisha somehow knows the scent of a shapechanger's old enemy, she has no control over *who* the target actually believes is around, only that he smells the presence of an enemy.

Shadow Walk — Vast as the Umbra is, there are regions where the Changing Breeds are normally forbidden to go — the Dark Umbra of the dead (a land the Nuwisha consider too depressing anyway), Horizon Realms, the



faerie stronghold of Arcadia, etc. No such bans exist for Nuwisha with this Gift, however — all the coyote needs to do is make a successful Gnosis Test against five Traits, and he may enter such lands freely. Of course, the Nuwisha must still be able to both find and reach these places in the first place, not to mention defeat any guardians he might encounter....

Sheep's Clothing — This Gift allows the Nuwisha to hide in plain sight by appearing to be another type of shapeshifter: Garou, Bastet, Corax, etc. By spending a Gnosis Trait and making a Static Mental Challenge against seven Traits (eight for really different forms like a raven), the Nuwisha may appear to be a perfectly normal member of that breed. This Gift allows the Nuwisha to use the caerns of other shapeshifters instead of maintaining their own. This deception fools all supernatural powers of detection, but the Nuwisha does not gain Traits from this change and may not simulate abilities a coyote cannot use (such as the flight of a raven) unless he also possesses Gifts that allow him to do so. This Gift lasts for one scene.

Umbral Howl (Umbral Danse) — A Nuwisha using this Gift is able to call other Nuwisha both in the mortal realm and the Umbra. It is commonly used as a way of swapping stories and informing others about a Nuwisha's progress in battling the Wyrms, and only rarely is it used as a distress call; when a Nuwisha does call for aid, however, it is usually quick in coming, and faeries, spirits and stranger allies have been known to arrive in response to this call. The range on this Gift is enormous, and is best left loosely as "whatever Nuwisha are within three or four states and a Realm or two", although the range for other allies should be much shorter. (Keep in mind how few Nuwisha there are in the mortal world at any given time.)

Advanced

Backfire — With this Gift, the Nuwisha may turn the tables on those who rely on supernatural powers or high technology, causing them to suffer the effects of their own favorite tools. When targeted by a supernatural power, the Nuwisha may spend two Gnosis Traits and attempt to win a Gnosis Challenge against the user's Willpower rating; if successful, the user immediately suffers the full damage or other effects of his own power. This Gift is not without risk, however — it may be activated as a defensive reaction (i.e., in response to a power activated that same turn), but if attempted unsuccessfully the Nuwisha has left himself open to the attack and must suffer the full effects of the power, no retests or other resistance possible. This Gift functions on guns and other technological weaponry as well, although the cost is simply one Gnosis Trait and the weapon is destroyed after the first successful use of *Backfire*. This Gift does not function against basic brawling attacks and melee or natural weaponry of any kind, although any supernatural powers used to augment such attacks — such as a ghoul punching with *Potence* — may still be turned against their user normally. (The ghoul would still inflict non-magical punching damage, but would also suffer the *Potence* damage levels



himself — reflected in game by such mishaps as breaking his knuckles while attacking, overextending his arm, etc.)

Ghost Dance (Umbral Danse) — With this potent Gift, the Nuwisha can fight in the material world and the Umbra simultaneously, attacking foes on either side and then completely avoiding damage. The Nuwisha must spend a Gnosis Trait per turn this Gift is in use, but while it is in effect he may not be harmed by any attacks short of this Gift or other comparable powers.

Heave-Ho — With this impressive Gift, the Nuwisha may send enemies flying for incredible distances. The Nuwisha must declare a Physical Challenge to throw his target first, then spend a Gnosis Trait; if successful, the target goes flying up to 10 feet for every Physical Trait the Nuwisha has. The target also suffers an extra level of damage from the increased force of impact. Obviously, the Nuwisha must be able to somehow lift his target in the first place for this Gift to be effective. This Gift is ideal for putting opponents out of reach for counterattacks, generating time to escape or just putting a target into an interesting piece of scenery at a high rate of speed. A time out may be called to move the target into his new position after this Gift is used.

Hidey-Hole — Sometimes the best thing for a trickster is simply a place to lay low for a while as the smoke from one's latest prank clears; with this Gift, the Nuwisha may create a small, perfectly concealed Umbral safe haven. The Nuwisha must spend a *permanent* Gnosis Trait and win a Mental Test against seven Traits to create the hidey-hole, but once it is created it lasts until dispelled by the Nuwisha or destroyed somehow. A hidey-hole can be created anywhere, even in the middle of an intersection or the side of a building, and when closed cannot be detected without some form of supernatural perception. Inside, the space is big enough to hide the Nuwisha and one other being the size of an adult human, as well as a small number of possessions and supplies.

Locked Door (Umbral Danse) — A last-ditch maneuver but a very potent one at that, this Gift allows the Nuwisha to block another being from entering or exiting the Umbra (as the coyote desires), trapping that being on one side of reality for one scene per permanent Gnosis Trait the Nuwisha possesses. This Gift is typically only used to ensure an escape, block Wyrms-creatures from fleeing (or crossing over to wreck havoc), or on rare occasions to prevent mages or other meddlers from interfering in important business. The Nuwisha must spend three Gnosis Traits and win a Willpower Test against five Traits; success means the target is blocked as per above.

Teasing Mate — With this Gift, the Nuwisha can bring about a surge of pheromones in his target, making her irresistible to others. The Nuwisha must touch his target (a Physical Challenge if the target resists) and defeat her in a Mental Challenge. If successful, all beings of the target's species and gender in the area must win a Static Willpower Challenge against five Traits or desire immediate copulation with the target. The Nuwisha absolutely love the humor value of this trick, especially in conservative settings, but that is not



its only application. The Nuwisha may also use this Gift on himself to boost his seductive powers (without necessarily attracting those of his own gender as above). This use of the Gift costs one Gnosis Trait and gives the Nuwisha the following bonus Traits: *Seductive* x 2. The Nuwisha also gains one free retest on all Social Challenges related to seduction for the duration of the Gift when it is used in this fashion. This Gift's effects last for one scene, regardless of how it is used.

Note: Great care must be exercised to ensure that the rules of *Mind's Eye Theatre* are observed while this Gift is in use: the "no touch" rule still applies (more strongly than usual), and no player should ever be made to feel uncomfortable out of character because of this Gift.

Trickster's Skin — This valuable Gift allows the Nuwisha to "swap skins" with someone else, taking on the voice and likeness of his target while the target assumes the Nuwisha's appearance. The Nuwisha must spend two Gnosis Traits and make a Static Mental Challenge against half the target's Mental Traits (round down). This Gift may be used at a distance, but only if the target is in sight. The effects of this Gift last for one scene, and this Gift is typically used by Nuwisha to escape an angry mob by causing them to chase "that damn coyote" while the disguised Nuwisha finds an excuse to slip away from his "friends." The Nuwisha and his target both should adopt a gesture, clothing, or other posture which indicates their altered appearance for the duration of the Gift. This Gift cannot be detected by *Heightened Senses* or other powers, although the Nuwisha may be discovered by other means if he gives away his true identity.

Umbral Gateway (Umbral Danse) — Most Nuwisha tricks are subtle, but every once in a while nothing less than a spectacular feat is needed, and that's where this Gift comes in. A Nuwisha employing it effectively creates a portal directly into the Umbra, allowing the Nuwisha and anyone he chooses to take with him to cross over between worlds. No other beings may use the Gift's effects without the Nuwisha's consent, however — the gateway is subject to his command, and those who use it must effectively have his consent to do so. The Nuwisha must make a Mental Challenge against ten Traits and spend four Gnosis Traits to activate the gateway. It remains open for as long as he desires (though no longer than one scene).

Wyld Throw (Umbral Danse) — With this potent Gift, the Nuwisha may not only fling a target into the Umbra, but may choose exactly where his target winds up: a mockery might be tossed into the Abyss, a tainted Garou thrown into the silver waters of Erebus, or a friendly faerie dropped off at Arcadia Gate. A target may also be heaved from the Umbra into the Gaia realm. To activate this Gift, the Nuwisha must spend a Gnosis Trait and grapple his target with a Physical Challenge; if successful, the target reappears exactly where the Nuwisha intended. If the target is already in the Umbra, all that's needed is a Static Gnosis Challenge against a difficulty of five Traits and the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait. Trickster keeps a close eye on the use of this



Gift, as it was intended as a rescue method and teaching tool, and a Nuwisha who abuses this Gift risks suddenly disappearing instead of his target one day....

Rites

For the most part, Nuwisha steal Garou rites, although they have invented a few of their own that Nuwisha guard jealously for fear the Garou might stumble on them and mess things up even worse than they have now. In particular one group of Nuwisha called the Umbral Dansers act as a police force of sorts in the Umbra, exploring Realms, protecting travelers and battling the endless dangers of the worlds beyond the Gauntlet. Entrance into this select group requires that a Nuwisha show exemplary courage, wisdom and commitment to the Nuwisha ways, as well as complete the *Rite of Dansing* (below). Umbral Dansers have no formal hierarchy, though the eldest among them are generally heeded in times of danger, but most of the time they respect the individualistic spirit that rests in their fellow Nuwisha and leave them to their own devices.

The Garou Rites Nuwisha may learn are as follows: *Rite of Becoming*, *Rite of Binding*, *Rite of Cleansing*, *Rite of the Fetish*, *Rite of the Opened Caern*, *Rite of Spirit Awakening*, *Rite of Summoning*, *Rite of Talisman Dedication*, *Rite of the Totem*, *Satire Rite*, *Voice of the Jackal*.

The following rites are unique to the Nuwisha:

Basic Rites

Rite of Dansing (Mystical) — This rite is the last step toward becoming a Umbral Danser and is taught only to those who have proven themselves worthy of joining the group. It is taught only by Umbral Dansers, although Trickster himself has been known to teach it to worthy Nuwisha if there is currently a shortage of fellow Nuwisha in the area. To complete the rite, the character must spend three days fasting and meditating, spending one Gnosis Trait per day (thus this rite is usually done in the "down time" between games). At the end of this time they must also recite to the Spirit Keeper all their past experiences battling the Wyrms, traveling the Umbra and teaching their fellow shapeshifters the error of their ways. At the end of this time, the Nuwisha makes a Mental Challenge against seven Traits, which can be retested with the *Enigmas* Ability. If successful, Trickster accepts the Nuwisha as a full Umbral Danser, and he may purchase Umbral Danse Gifts.

Intermediate Rites

Rite of the Dream Danse (Mystical) — This potent rite allows the Nuwisha to know the location of all his fellow Umbral Dansers and to ask a question of them through a sort of shared dream. In game terms, the Nuwisha must enter a trance for at least half an hour and think of the question he wishes answered. The Umbral Dansers individually consider the worthiness of the



question and, if they decide it is worthy (Narrator's discretion), answer in the form of a riddle. Solving the riddle typically requires great ingenuity, although stumped players may request a Static Mental Challenge with the *Enigmas* Ability to unravel it (the difficulty varies, but is usually quite high). When solved, the riddles can offer great insight and even glimpses of the future. Many Nuwisha believe that Trickster himself answers the questions, but that remains unknown. The Nuwisha need not be a full Umbral Danser to use this rite; indeed, many applicants request full membership through use of this rite.

Advanced Rites

Caern Concealment (Caern) — This rite requires at least 10 Nuwisha to perform, which ensures it isn't performed often in the modern world, but it allows the participants to hide a caern from all but the Nuwisha themselves. It has not been performed in living memory, but wise Nuwisha teach it still, knowing it will one day see use again. Thirty Gnosis Traits are required to seal the rite, and the ritemaster must make at least four Static Mental Challenges against a difficulty of the rating of the caern x 2. Thus, to conceal a rank two caern is a Static Mental Challenge against four Traits, a rank four caern is against eight Traits, a rank five caern 10 Traits and soon.

Sing Back the Dead (Mystical) — Only one Nuwisha ever knows this rite at a time, as it is taught by Trickster himself. This rite is the power to defy the rules of life and death, allowing the coyote to sing back one or more werecreatures. The Nuwisha must spend a permanent Gnosis Trait for each individual they wish to reanimate, plus one additional permanent Gnosis Trait for each health level of damage any of the bodies sustained past what was needed to kill them (if a Garou had one health level left and was killed with a shot that did three levels of damage, two additional permanent Gnosis Traits would be needed). This rite can only be performed when Coyote himself demands it, although any Nuwisha who has been given the honor of learning this rite in the first place usually instinctively knows when it is and isn't necessary.

Trickster's Many Faces

Nuwisha Totems

All Nuwisha follow Trickster, but each coyote does so in his own fashion, according to the type of prankster his nature calls him to be. For his part, Coyote doesn't care which of his faces the Nuwisha chooses to follow, or even if the Nuwisha switches between faces from time to time — after all, he knows better than they that all these faces are really the same being anyway! Thus a Nuwisha on the warpath may take to following Loki for a time, switch to Kishijoten while rebuilding a damaged caern, and turn to Xochipilli for a wild vacation. In addition, all Umbral Dansers automatically follow Ptah, but



many choose another totem as well to reflect the way they carry out the duties of their station. This is not to say that Nuwisha switch totems from day to day — even Coyote has his limits — but simply that Nuwisha may follow more than one face of Trickster at a time and suffer no penalty for doing so as long as they respect the demands of the different totems they owe allegiance to. This can be demanding on the coyote's habits, but can also offer much in the way of allies and information, as servants of both totems consider the Nuwisha a friend and do what they can to aid him. Most Nuwisha eventually develop an affinity for one or two aspects of Coyote and stay with them, and those coyotes who do not eventually bond to at least one of Trickster's faces are considered pitiable and strange by their fellows.

In game terms, a Nuwisha may follow any number of Coyote's faces at the same time, but only gains the bonus Traits for one; however, the Nuwisha must respect the different Bans of all the totems he chooses to follow or risk losing Trickster's favor. The totem whose bonus Traits are gained is the one that the Nuwisha has paid for with the Background Totem; if the Nuwisha wishes to shift to another totem on a permanent basis, those points can be transferred to the new totem, but the Storyteller must determine if the old totem's bonus Traits (not to mention any Gifts taught by servants of that totem) are retained. Most of the time Trickster does not revoke his Gifts unless the Nuwisha has committed some grave offense, but it has been known to happen. Alternately, the Storyteller may declare that the Nuwisha must purchase the bonus Traits of the new totem with Experience Traits instead — that keeps the Nuwisha from racking up too many free Traits and Abilities very quickly while not making the switch entirely pointless either. At the Storyteller's discretion, coyotes low on Experience Traits may purchase the new totem's bonus Traits "on credit" and pay for them in the future, but that is strictly optional. Above all, changing totems should be a roleplaying decision based on changes in a character's life, not just an easy way to rack up all manner of free Traits and Ability levels.

For example: *Luke begins play with five levels of the Totem Background, which he invests in following Xochipilli. Later on he chooses to follow the ways of Raven as well — now he must respect the Bans of both totems to keep Trickster's favor but only gains the bonus traits of Xochipilli. Should Luke choose to switch to Raven on a permanent basis, he may transfer the levels he has of the Totem Background to that totem instead, but depending on the Storyteller's decision he may have to relinquish the bonus traits that Xochipilli granted, keep those Traits but purchase Raven's new bonus Traits with Experience, etc.*

Ti Malice

Cost: 4

Trickster's Spider form is a manipulator whose schemes span years and whose plans are brilliant in their Machiavellian efficiency. Needless to say, many Nuwisha take to following Ti Malice when plotting revenge of any kind, as do coyotes who find themselves caught up in any form of politics or intrigue.



Excellent liars and schemers one and all, children of Ti Malice are two Traits up on all *Subterfuge* and *Enigmas* Challenges.

Ban: Ti Malice demands that her followers show no mercy to the weak, especially in business.

Loki

Cost: 7

Loki is one of the Trickster's favorite war forms, a cunning rogue who takes no prisoners and is always ready with a clever ambush or bloody (but still instructive) prank. The great boldness and bravado of Loki's followers shocks many other changers, who assume that the Nuwisha are all sneaky cowards and jokesters. He is popular with many young Nuwisha these days, especially as they mingle with the warrior Garou. Loki's chosen gain an additional Healthy health level and an additional Physical Trait of their choice (even if this takes them over normal Trait maximums).

Ban: Loki demands that his followers always accept formal challenges, even from the Wyrms. A Loki must also offer her kills to her totem as sacrifice.

Kishijoten

Cost: 4

Few think of Trickster as a healer, yet this is precisely what this aspect is concerned with; followers of Kishijoten are still pranksters but devote most of their time to tending the injured, and many of their tricks are designed to teach lessons about caring and humility to their targets. Kishijoten's followers gain an additional Healthy health level and a free level of the *Medicine* Ability.

Ban: Kishijoten asks that her followers always stop to help the injured, excluding the Wyrms' minions.

Ptah

Cost: 5 (Not available during character creation)

Known as the Opener of the Ways and the Creator of the Universe, Ptah is the watcher of the Umbra and the keeper of its secrets, and acts as a spiritual guardian to all Nuwisha in the Umbra, the Umbral Dansers in particular. Their tricks are most often riddles and enigmatic puzzles that can take days to solve. All followers of Ptah cross over easily into the Umbra — the difficulty of such travel is reduced by three, to a minimum of three Traits. Additionally, only Nuwisha who follow Ptah may learn the Umbral Danse; while in the Umbra, they age at a fraction of their normal rate and may use the Gift Sense Wyrms freely.

Ban: Ptah asks that his followers defend the stars from all who would cause them harm.

Kokopelli and Pan

Cost: 4

Kokopelli is the Dancer and the Jester, while Pan is the Dancer and the Lover, but most Nuwisha consider them so similar (if not in fact the same)



that they follow both at once. These spirits are great hedonists who enjoy bringing laughter and freedom to the lives of others, and take great pleasure in humbling the mighty and teaching the folly of "proper behavior" and other stifling codes of conduct to those who sorely need it. Followers of Kokopelli or Pan gain the Physical Trait *Tireless* and a free retest on all *Performance* Challenges (musical instruments and dancing only).

Ban: Kokopelli and Pan insist that the Nuwisha who follow them never strike out in anger.

Chung Kuel

Cost: 6

Giver of Luck, Breaker of Odds, this face of Trickster teaches lessons about the fickle nature of luck and how great shifts of fortune (both good and bad) often ride on incredibly small or coincidental events. Nuwisha who follow Chung Kuel manipulate odds, but not to make themselves win; rather, they do so in order to make their enemies lose, a subtle but very important distinction. Once per story (not necessarily at the character's request), followers of Chung Kuel can cast bad luck on those who deserve it — a villain's gun might misfire, his getaway car might fail to start or his possessions might be stolen in a "random" break-in. The actual effects of this bad luck are up to the Storyteller but should be dramatic (this only happens once per story, after all) and tied to Chung Kuel's particular brand of trickery. Players should not be handed a certain victory by means of this advantage, but giving a deserving character a second chance is certainly acceptable. Followers of Chung Kuel are also up two Traits on all *Stealth* and *Subterfuge* Tests.

Ban: Chung Kuel asks that the abilities he grants be used only against those who knowingly follow the Wyrn.

Puck

Cost: 3

A low and crafty spirit, this face of Trickster embodies chaos and rebellion, appearing in everything from minor acts of vandalism and mischief to riots and uprisings. Puck also strives to keep those in authority honest by testing the limits of their lordly patience and virtues. Those touched by this spirit tend to attract faeries of the Unseelie Court as allies, although their more noble Seelie kin find their company unsettling. Followers of Puck gain a free level of *Stealth* and are two Traits up on any challenges involved in escaping the wrath of those in power.

Ban: Puck demands that his followers always test the worthiness of those in power, and must never allow a boastful or self-righteous person to pass without being properly humbled.

Xochipilli

Cost: 5

A being of extremes, Xochipilli believes that life is best experienced as loud, fast and intensely as possible and demands that his followers do the same. Fortunately, Xochipilli grants great luck as well, allowing his followers to



survive amazing encounters largely untouched; all of his chosen receive a free retest on all *Survival* Tests to reflect how easily they get by even in the roughest of circumstances. Additionally, followers of Xochipilli gain an additional three Healthy Health Levels and a free retest, only usable for soaking damage, whenever they attempt an outrageous stunt that should prove fatal — this special ability functions only when the odds are very, *very* high against surviving an encounter. (No, combat does *not* count unless the Storyteller specifically says so.) Optionally, the Storyteller may simply state that the Nuwisha somehow survived the falling off a tall cliff in a burning car; this is not to say that the coyote will emerge unscathed, of course, but a crippled Nuwisha is still better than one blasted into tiny flaming pieces!

Ban: Xochipilli requests that his followers never turn away from a dare, no matter what the odds of surviving.

Oghma

Cost: 8 (Not available during character creation)

Only the wisest Nuwisha ever earn the favor of Trickster's most learned face, but those that are accepted by the Bard and the Judge become invaluable for their ability to teach others humility and often seek out fellow Nuwisha in need of a lesson or two themselves. Followers of Oghma can call upon an additional three Willpower Traits per story. They are four Traits up on any Physical Challenge or five Traits up on any Mental Challenge whenever they are teaching another person humility (and *only* at those times). Oghma also teaches his children to sense when another Nuwisha is in need of some humble pie herself, and his followers cannot be surprised.

Ban: Oghma asks that his followers never strike out in anger.

Raven

Cost: 5

As the Corax well know, Raven is a gatherer of secrets and a master of riddles and prophecy. Those Nuwisha who follow him usually live lives of seeming poverty but are always rich in knowledge. The raven-folk trust them as well and welcome them into their company whenever they find them. Followers of Raven gain a free level of *Enigmas* and *Subterfuge*.

Ban: Raven asks that his children never carry wealth; they must trust in Raven to provide for them.

Fetishes

Walkers of Umbral trails and keepers of the stars, the Nuwisha often come across items of power, and many more are liberated from the clutches of those deemed too ignorant or greedy to handle them properly. The most potent fetishes (especially stolen ones) are usually taken to the Umbral Dansers for safekeeping — the corruptive touch of such truly powerful items is well known to the Nuwisha — but most other ones are fair game for whatever coyote happens to come across them. A particularly worthy Nuwisha



may even be "loaned" a fetish or two in order to perform some great service, though such loans are usually temporary and closely monitored. As such, many Nuwisha come across a good number of fetishes in their time, and while their somewhat fluid concept of property means that they don't always hold on to them for long, clever coyotes know that it never hurts to keep an ace up your sleeve.

Most Nuwisha-created fetishes are defensive by nature, but even their more aggressive ones typically show a heavy touch of Nuwisha humor in their operation. Magic is nothing without style, after all!

Coyote's Fang

Fetish Trait Cost: 3 **Gnosis:** 4

Spirit Affinity: Coyote (only)

Melee Bonus Traits: 2

These fearsome daggers are said to be formed from one of Coyote's own teeth, and when activated they inflict aggravated damage against all opponents. In addition, a Fang allows the bearer to attack opponents on both sides of the Gauntlet simultaneously (provided, of course, the Nuwisha can see or otherwise sense opponents there). No spirit is immune to the fang's power, no matter what Realm they might be in. These fetishes only work for Nuwisha and function as nothing more than a normal dagger in the hands of anyone else.

Powder of Kishijoten

Fetish Trait Cost: 3 **Gnosis:** 4

Spirit Affinity: Healing, Calm

Actually a talen, this potent powder automatically heals any wound that is not fatal, causing even aggravated wounds to disappear without a scar. Mortal wounds, while not healed, bleed much less freely than normal, and poisons are slowed without causing any additional damage. Most bags contain enough of the fine green powder for three uses.

The Ball of Death

Fetish Trait Cost: 4 **Gnosis:** 6

Spirit Affinity: Coyote, Raven,

Desire

At first glance, this infamous fetish is a little odd but really nothing special, just a black rubber sphere about the size of a soccer ball, decorated in dull white paint with a large skull and crossbones and the name of the fetish. When activated, however, it becomes a subtle but powerful tool for causing dissension — those other than the Nuwisha who actually touch the ball must immediately make a Willpower Test against the ball's Gnosis rating or desire nothing else but to possess it, bounce it and play with it for the rest of the scene. They resist having it taken away with any means at their disposal, including violence if necessary. To make it even more interesting, as soon as the ball is activated, all nearby characters (same building, or same floor in large buildings) with supernatural senses of any kind — *Heightened Senses*, *Kenning*, *Sense Magic*, etc. — immediately detect a surge of powerful, mysterious magic emanating from the ball, which grows stronger as they approach.



This almost always prompts a desire to examine it, which likely leads to one or more other characters triggering the magic of the ball, which leads to a struggle as the first owner's possessiveness turns to anger. At present, only one of these fetishes is known to exist, but rumors of new varieties of such balls have begun to emerge.

Pipes of Kokopelli

Fetish Trait Cost: 4 **Gnosis:** 6 **Spirit Affinity:** Illusion, Trickery, Rat

With this fetish, the Nuwisha may play a tune and attempt to lead any Banes in the area either into or out of the Umbra. In addition to normal activation costs, this fetish requires a Social Challenge with the *Performance* Ability against the Bane's Willpower rating; in the case of multiple Banes, use the normal rules for group challenges. Success means that the Banes can do nothing but follow the Nuwisha for as long as the music is playing. Only Nuwisha may use these fetishes; to all others they are normal pipes.

Mirror of Ti Malice

Fetish Trait Cost: 4 **Gnosis:** 6 **Spirit Affinity:** Fear, Rage, Ancestor

Another unique fetish, missing since the second War of Rage, the mirror is a small silver disk that allows the Nuwisha to turn the tables on his enemies; once activated, it causes all who view the Nuwisha to suffer the Delirium as if they were mortal, even supernatural foes and other skinchangers. Activating the mirror costs a Gnosis Trait in addition to normal activation costs.

Eye of Ptah

Fetish Trait Cost: 5 **Gnosis:** 7 **Spirit Affinity:** Ptah (only)

This small black crystal allows the Nuwisha to look on her surroundings and know the truth about anything in the area — disguises are immediately transparent, invisible characters detected, nearby spirits revealed, even concealed weapons become partially visible. Hidden items are not made visible, only the results of what the item will be. (Thus a hidden bomb will provide a vision of an explosion to the coyote, but the Eye will not reveal its exact location.) The Nuwisha must hold the crystal to her eye and spend a Gnosis Trait as part of the activation process. Due to the amount of information that can potentially be revealed, it is recommended that a Narrator be ready to impart any extra information to the user of the fetish. Note that the Eye of Ptah doesn't explain all the secrets behind the truth it reveals: if a building is housing a powerful Bane, a Nuwisha viewing the structure with the Eye will immediately understand that the building is haunted by something wicked but will not necessarily know that a Bane is the culprit or where in the building it keeps its lair.





Corax

Take It From the Top

Hey there, newcomer. Pull up a branch and let's get down to business, shall we? I haven't got a whole lot of time to kill and, frankly, I think being the one to break the new fledges in is a pain in the tail feathers. But seeing as how your normal teacher decided to take a jaunt into the Umbra for an extended vacation, I'm the one who got the nod. What's that? What's the *Umbra*?!

Right. New bird. Sorry.

Well then... I'll just start at the top. I'm gonna try to give you a complete history of the race in 30 seconds or less, and then — since you obviously haven't had much in the way of learning since you earned your wings — a little splash about what makes us ravens tick, how we fit into the big picture on this mudball, so forth and so on. It's a whole lot to pick up in a short time, but that's the good thing about us — we learn like nobody's business. Sometimes even when we don't want to, but that's the price you pay to fly. Before long, you'll be seeing places and talking to people you never even dreamed existed, and if you aren't quick like the rest of us, you'll have to stick to lame-ass topics like the weather and "How 'bout those Phillies?" and how do you expect to pick up any good dirt that way? Because you *will* be picking up dirt. That's what we're here for, after all, and if you're no good at that, well, better pack up those wings and go home. So grab that branch tight and keep your ears open, because I hate to repeat myself, okay? Ready? Here we go, from the top....

Who, me? My name's Morgan; I suppose you already know yours. If you want to be really picky, the other Corax know me as Map-to-the-Stars, but it doesn't really matter at the moment. That good enough? Swell. Let's begin.



Dysfunctional Cosmic Families and Other Hilarities

First thing just about anybody ever hears is the way the cosmos came to be. And it's a pretty funny notion, if you think about it, because every group in the world with more brain cells than members (and quite a few with less) has their own story about How It All Came to Be, most of them ridiculously self-serving. Think about it — if group X is going to take the time to write up a big manifesto about the origin of reality, they're going to make darn sure that they come out at the center of it all, right? And they do, all the time, whether you're speaking with humans who'll bore your feathers off with talk of Big Bangs and other tired sexual innuendoes, vampires who get off about coming from the First Psycho or Garou who like to yammer on about how Gaia just happened to pick them as Her favorite squad of homicidal animal throwbacks. Ask us, though, it's *all* a bunch of crap — who's around today who can really say for sure? Will everyone in the room who's over a million years old please raise their hand? That's what I thought. As far as we're concerned, the universe just is, and that's fine with us for the time being — we've got our talons tied just dealing with what's going on around us to worry too much about where it all came from, got me?

There is some stuff you do need to know about those early days, though, because it's something we know is true from watching the world go by all this time. See, in the beginning there were three fun little cosmic playmates: the Wyld, who's nuttier than a monkey on speed and twice as creative; the Weaver, who likes to put things into neat little rows and play the dominant in the B&D tie-up game that is the universe; and the Wyrms, who as far as we can tell is in charge of eating things and generally making a mess of the cosmos. Everything was just peachy-keen for who knows how long, until the Wyld ran off one day to pick flowers or walk her goldfish or whatever, and Weaver and Wyrms decided to play a little game on their own. Weaver talked Wyrms into letting her tie him up — "Promise I'll let you do it next," I'm sure — and then just kind of laughed and left him there. So Wyrms got all pissed off and started thrashing around, trying to break free, and he got so ticked that he went a little nuts. He's still trapped in the Weaver's web to this day, and believe you me, it has not improved his temper one bit. That's why the world is slowly going to hell in one big hand basket — the Weaver keeps adding more and more technology to her web, trying to hold the Wyrms down, but he just turns it to his own advantage and struggles even harder to break free. In case you haven't noticed, humans are remarkably good at turning just about anything into a weapon if you give them enough time; it's the only thing besides sex they haven't gotten tired of yet. Where'd the Wyld go? Good question. We're still waiting for her to come back, although I don't think she'll be too happy when she finds out what the other kids have done to her room while she was out.



So when'd we come along? Quiet, I'm getting there! While the three members of the Triat were busy going looney tunes, their kids got together and decided they were going to make some children of their own, the better to put up some speed bumps between them and the demolition derby going on around them. (Real noble of them, right? Get used to it, kid, because it ain't gonna change any time soon.) As eldest daughter, Gaia was put in charge, and she loaded up a whole slew of races with all kinds of goodies: shapeshifting, magical talents, righteous ass-whupping power, you name it. Trouble was, She handed them to Her little sister Luna while She was waiting for them to dry, and Luna started playing around with them when Gaia wasn't looking, like any younger sibling would. That's why the other Changing Breeds are so messed up — they try to live up to the nice role that Gaia made them for, but Luna messed around with their wiring a bit, and so everything they do is just a little bit off. Fortunately for us, though, Raven came last of all of Gaia's creations, and She turned around just in time to see what Luna had been up to. Well, it was too late to fix the others, and now She couldn't put us down either, so She was kind of at a loss. That's when Raven really saved our feathers, kid — even half-created, Raven was no fool, and he spotted someone else who could sponsor us. A smile and some whispering later, and we were on our way, the only Changing Breed to avoid getting their head messed with by Luna's gentle little fingers. Who'd we wind up with? Why, Luna's brother, of course — after all, what harm can possibly come from a little sibling rivalry?

Enter the Sun God

Yeah, we wound up sponsored by Helios, the Sun God, but it wasn't quite the sweet deal that we had hoped it would be, at least not at first. Sure, Helios was so impressed that Gaia let him look after us that he showered us with all kinds of goodies, and that's cool, but he's also something of a prima donna and can be just a *little* too temperamental for our taste at times. Like the time he took offense at something we lowly Gaia-dwellers did and took a powder — just up and left his post, leaving everything in the dark and getting chilly fast. Raven knew we were bound for the frozen foods section of the universe if we didn't act fast, so he got our whole tribe together, nicked a tool from Luna's wardrobe and we all flew off to Helios' place. Suffice it to say that with a few slick words and one very silly Celestine catching a glimpse of himself in a mirror, we were able to convince the Big H that we'd found a replacement sun, the universe was perfectly happy without him, etc. Of course, just when he was going to extinguish himself from grief, we flew up and said that we could get him his job back, but only if he came back to Gaia with us pronto. Clever plan, sure, and he bought it wholesale, but we didn't get back quite unscathed from that little adventure — Helios flew to Earth in such a rush that he burned every last one of us black, and we've been that way ever since. Well, that's not quite true; every once in a while one of our kind is still born completely white. They're really rare, and legend says that they have a special connection to the



Underworld, on account of how "Helios hasn't seen them" and stuff like that. There hasn't been one in living memory, but it's a big world — one's bound to turn up sooner or later.

Of course, considering that we managed to save the world from being flash-frozen, you'd figure we'd get more of a hero's welcome, but no such luck. The other changers have never been able to see us in anything but a supporting role, and wouldn't you know it, before long they were arguing among themselves about who had brought back the sun. Fortunately, Gaia saw what we had done, and She decided to give us a special sanction, like She had given to all Her other children, but couldn't quite decide which one to award us. We were already tricksters, but Coyote had swiped that role for himself early on; likewise, we were the most talented scouts in the world, but Fritz's saber-toothed ancestors had snuck into the post of chief observers as well. We were wise, but that meant we were wise enough not to bump the bears or the 'gators from their spots, where they were already doing a lot of good. Likewise, we're not weaklings, but nonetheless we wouldn't *want* the spots the rats and the wolves claimed — too much screaming and hitting huge things that hit back, you know?

So Gaia was puzzled, but once again Raven looked after his own — he suggested to Her that if there wasn't any one spot we fit in, why couldn't we just go wherever we were needed, and tell Gaia all about it later? That way we could still serve Gaia's plan, but we'd have the freedom to do it however we liked. Of course, to be in so many places like that, we'd need wings for everyone, even our human cousins, plus a bunch of other favors that it just so happens that only Gaia could provide (I told you, no one gets one past Raven — he's the best). Gaia agreed, and that's why Raven means so many different things around the world — a Trickster here, a Creator there, you name it. To us, it's all just different ways of looking at our basic mission — to put our beaks where they don't belong, uncover secrets that need to be uncovered and then watch the fireworks when the heat comes down. And we've been doing it pretty much nonstop ever since.

Other Changing Breeds occasionally give us crap about "not having Luna's blessing" and stuff like that. Oh yeah, it's done *them* a world of good, sure. What's that I keep hearing about unstoppable, rip-apart-your-best-friend-type homicidal rages every time a little silver disc shows up in the sky? I mean, don't get me wrong, we have no problems with Luna. Sure, she can be a little touchy about the fact that we're down with her bro and haven't done a whole lot to court her over the years, but we're not dumb enough to piss her off either (coyotes, you might consider this). So we're pretty much okay with her most of the time. If you meet her or one of her little friends while you're swooping through the Umbra, be polite, like you would be with any other spirit — the moon sees a lot, after all, and if you're really nice, she just might share it with you.



Raven Takes Off

Of course, Helios might catch on to our little ruse eventually, and as nice as he normally is, we couldn't risk that he'd pull another disappearing act and let all of creation freeze for good this time. So after we'd gotten our act together and started following Gaia's new plan, Raven called us all together for one big meeting, the first real Parliament of our kind, in fact. He said that while it was lovely we all got along so well, we were supposed to be covering every corner of the globe, and the only way we'd do that is if we got lost. Literally. We'd still get together every now and again, of course, but from here on out we were to operate mostly as a solo act, and save the big group scenes for passing along important secrets and otherwise bragging about what we know. Being the obedient kids that we are, we took off, and pretty soon there wasn't much of the world (above water, anyway) that we weren't watching from one angle or another. Even today, when two of our kind run across each other, they do like Raven told them to and take a while to pass on everything they think is of real importance — and a lot of stuff that isn't, since that keeps any eavesdroppers guessing — so everything spreads through our community as fast as possible. A secret you have might not make much sense to you, but it might just be the last piece of the puzzle I'm looking for.

Naturally enough, this worked into Raven's plans in other ways too — by spreading us all around the globe, he makes sure there are always a couple of us hiding out from Helios, so the poor guy can never quite put the whole picture together. Sounds mean, I know, but when the stakes are a turn in the freezer for everything on the planet, I think we're entitled to fool even the Big H, right? Like I said, Raven's as clever as they come — any time he sets one thing in motion, you can be sure it's helping two or three other plans of his along, even if you don't see the results yourself. Paranoid? A little, sure. Justified? You bet your sweet beak it is!

Sit, Stay, Massacre -Bad Dog!

Let me explain something to you really quickly — suppose you crossed the meanest, nastiest, most bloodthirsty wolves with the type of humans who spend their time harnessing the elemental forces, bargaining with spirits and otherwise summoning up all kinds of power that humans really aren't meant to have. Suppose that you sawed open their feverish little skulls and burned the words "We Are Better Than Everyone" right across the old gray matter inside, so they never forgot it. Exactly how sociable do you think they'd be with the rest of the world, now that everything else is nice and inferior to their comfy little world view? Right, I'd start flying away too. Now take this out of the realm of supposition and you've got the actual ingredients that sparked the first War of Rage, or the time when the Garou — that's what the werewolves are called — decided that they were through lording it over the regular humans and wolves around them, and they'd get the other Changing Breeds to kneel before them too. (How they expected to us kneel without any knee joints... never mind.)



Mind you, this is going back almost a dozen millennia, but the way you hear the rest of them talk about it, you'd think it was yesterday. Funny how alliances never seem to last, but apocalyptic genocidal grudges are forever.

So now you're probably thinking to yourself, "Hey, what's the problem here? Why didn't the other Changing Breeds — ravens included — just gang-tackle the wolves and rub their fur the wrong way until they cried 'Gaia,' or something along those lines?" Perfectly logical, but that's not how things worked out. Being crazy the way wolves are, they decided that they'd take out the other Breeds one by one instead of declaring open war on us all. By the time people noticed what was going on, we'd already lost a whole bunch of cousins, from the weregeckos to the weremanatees (don't laugh, they were good folks — a little on the slow side, maybe, but still family), even on down to the werewallabies. Just ran up to them, gave a little speech about lupine superiority and *whack*, no more of that species. To make matters worse, when we found out about the slaughter going on, we got orders from Raven himself not to fight back. That's right — if anyone from one of the other Breeds ever starts giving you crap about how we sold out, keep your mouth shut and know that it wasn't our choice to make. Helios knows that we wanted to stick it to the wolves for the crimes they were committing, but *it wasn't our time to fight*.

So officially we sided with the wolves — kept our eggs safer that way — and unofficially we did our best to warn the others about upcoming attacks and at least help them get their Kin to safety, if nothing else. Sure, we gave the Garou information, but only enough to keep them from turning on us, and I'll be damned if I ever admit to the "war crimes" the Bastet and some of the others try to pin on us. We're here to see everything and report the actions of both sides, and we can't do that if we're all lying dead in a ditch somewhere. Besides, when your totem comes down and tells you to lay off, believe me, you take your pretty little beak out just as fast as you can. As it was, eventually truces were reached and treaties struck (thanks in no small part to our information gathering efforts, I might add), but like I said, even today the old wounds of the war are still there on both sides, still far from healed. I don't like to think about what happened, but then again, who knows? If we had thrown in, we might have changed the outcome a bit... or been added to the casualty list. All I have to say is: Maybe the first War of Rage wasn't our proudest hour, but at least it wasn't our last.

And Then Some Other Stuff Happened

Things cooled down for a while between the Breeds, and in the meantime there was what has been politely termed by our kind as a "monkey explosion." No, I'm not talking bits of bone and banana spattered everywhere, I'm talking about the spread of humanity and the incredible technological achievements that went on while we supposedly noble and enlightened folks were busily galking each other right and left. And while public schooling sure as hell ain't what it used to be, I'm sure you've got at least some familiarity with the course of world history, so I'll stick to the highlights and skip all the mundane details



about different times and places that we used to hang around a lot in the old days, although the other ravens might well quiz you on it later, so look up the stuff you don't recognize.

Suffice it to say that we were big in ancient Greece — a philosophy based on asking questions, pestering folks and otherwise digging up the dirty secrets of the populace? Sound familiar, anyone? We even managed to get our pictures in Aesop's tell-all about the animal kingdom, though I have to add that he slandered us pretty bad with that one legend. Hmmp. Also deserving honorable mention at this point are the Norse folks and the Celts, and we still keep a dear place in our hearts for both of them. The Norse valued us as Huginn and Munin, the Thought and Memory of their greatest god Odin, and the Celts gave us our place as the first birds of battle, the Morrigan. A lot of Garou still give thanks and invoke the names of the Morrigan before battle, and sometimes the ravens of war even stop by for a blessing, Gaia help them. Me, I steer clear of those three — too creepy for my tastes. I can't forget the Tengu of Japan either, who remain faithful correspondents to this day, although they tend to keep to their own more than the rest of us and definitely don't care to share some secrets with those they consider "outsiders." Finally, we owe a big debt to the tribes of the Pacific Northwest, who have held us high as Creator and Trickster for longer than even we can easily remember. Most of us are still drawn from one of those cultures in some part or another, although it's by no means a requirement, and we do them favors as often as we can by way of gratitude. But remembering Kin isn't just good business, it's good karma as well — too many of them have died to help keep us and ours safe, so show some respect when you're thereabouts, understand?

We didn't do much in the Impergium — not too many legends about giant ravens swooping down to carry off peasants, you might notice — and some Garou still bear us a grudge for that, but we don't care too much. Humans were just too interesting and had too many cool secrets to pry into, and we couldn't bring ourselves to help stamp them out like some kind of hairy, bipedal brushfire. Maybe it was a mistake, looking around now, but who the hell could've predicted all this, especially back then? Anyway, the modern world doesn't do too badly by us anyway, so we might just have made the right decision after all. Our wake-up call came during the Industrial Revolution, when they started to fill the skies with poison and we realized that "Wait, these monkeys might be dangerous after all!" It's a shame it took a threat to our own self-interest to get some kind of action going, but that's the way it goes sometimes. As it is, you can see our talons all over the early efforts of journalists to shut down child labor mills or factories that were coating the area in toxic soot. We didn't take the humans by the hand, but we certainly weren't above slipping them key pieces of information every once in a while either. Even now, we're still some of the most dedicated watch dogs (birds? whatever) of industrial pollution, and a lot of the biggest stories of the last couple decades had their start in our own information network. And that was just the tip of the iceberg....



For all our foresight, though, one thing still hit us hard — the new War of Rage brewing in the New World, or the Pure Lands as the native changers refer to it. Talk about your rookie mistakes, kid. Two of the first rules of this business: never assume your audience knows anything, and never assume that they'll remember something once you've told it to them. Got that? Good. Then maybe we won't have any repeats of that fiasco in the future.

But Those Who Fail History...

With the westward movement came all sorts of problems. First of all, there were the immigrant Garou — Wyrmscomers, the locals called 'em, and not without some justification, I'm afraid — and they were looking settle down, start some new caerns and otherwise get away from the long shadow of the Wyrms that was coiled all around their European stomping grounds. Unfortunately, where they started setting up shop was already the home of three full tribes of native Garou, and they had no intention of leaving just so that over-muscled Old World yahoos could play *Little Caern on the Prairie*. Being the reasonable, mature and diplomatic individuals that they are, the Garou promptly began slaughtering each other, and before anyone knew it we had a second War of Rage on our hands. By the time we arrived in force, the fight had already cost the Pure Ones a whole tribe of their Kin, and nobody seemed to notice that there was a giant Wyrmspirit waiting in the wings, just itching to do some more serious bodily harm to anyone left standing. But it was already too late to spread the word — native Bastet, Mokolé, even some Corax from the aforementioned Northwest tribes were already fighting on the side of the Pure Ones. Instead of taking a hint and backing off, the immigrant Garou just kept calling for more and more backup. I'm not proud about it either, but sometimes Corax even found each other on opposite sides of the conflict despite the sacred neutrality among our own kind, and what transpired on nights like that is the stuff of absolute Greek tragedy. Just pray you're never caught in a conflict of loyalties like that, or you'll wish you were dead long before anybody's bullet or claw puts you in the dirt, trust me.

This time the cessation of the war came from an even more pressing need — everyone had to band together, if only briefly, to defeat the Storm Eater, also known as the Big-Wyrms-Nasty-Nobody-But-Us-Seemed-To-Have-Noticed. After that, things fell into an uneasy truce, but skirmishes on both sides still happen in some of the remote territories, and you need ask no further than the nearest Wendigo or particularly stubborn Get of Fenris to know that nobody out there really considers it settled, either. Another bloodbath in our backyard, just waiting for the right match to fall and hit the tinder to get it going again. We have to scramble to keep the Garou busy fighting the Wyrms (you know, that thing they're *supposed* to do) in order to keep them from remembering they meant to start killing each other once again. Charming, eh? Welcome to my world, kid. Still, our only other choice is to sit back, cross our fingers and hope nothing bad happens, and what the hell kind of choice is that? I didn't think so either.



And Now, Without Further Ado: Now!

So here we are, just crossing into the 21st century, and what's going on? A lot that's bad, sure, but there's a lot of really helpful stuff that we never had before, too, and that goes a long way toward balancing out some of the things that aren't turning out so well. For one thing, the Internet — with its rumor mills, anonymous email sources and especially the guerrilla war mentality many hackers have against everything deemed “secret” and “important” in the world — is a Corax dream come true, and we use it like no other Breed does, except maybe the Glass Walkers. Sure, being aware of the supernatural means you have to take some extra precautions when swapping good secrets online (one run-in with a Pattern Spider is all it takes to be convinced some paranormal safety measures are necessary, believe me), but the trade-off in the ability to keep in touch and spread information to a large number of people more than makes up for it. Likewise, while controlled by any number of shadow players, human and otherwise, the mass media are still a tempting way for clever Corax to spread rumors and expose stories to the public, provided that you're brave or wily enough to elude those who would silence the press at least long enough to make your story heard. In short, there's a lot of really incredible technological backup for us out there now — make sure you use as much of it as you can, or rest assured eventually someone will use it against you.

What's that? “Metaphysically speaking”? Oh, right. Well, in terms of the *really* big picture, it's still pretty grim: the Wyld is still out there somewhere, contemplating its navel; the Weaver has gone a little nuts with technology and is trying to invent a do-funny for absolutely everything; and the Wyrms have gone from crazy to pure psychotic and is trying to undo the foundation of the world itself. More and more of the world falls to corruption every day, but on the other hand, I like to think we're stronger and better organized than we have been in centuries. Some of the other Breeds are finally listening to us and getting hip to the times instead of moping about ancient wins or losses all day long. We're still basically a peewee football team that's been sent up against the hardcore heavyweight division of your favorite wrestling federation, but who knows? We might still pull it off somehow. If nothing else, it would certainly seem in line with our universe's rather quirky sense of humor, don't you think?

In the meantime, it's time to stop talking so much about history and start rubbing some local color into your brain — the kinds of things that keep all of us ravens from going absolutely crackers from all the things we see. Beak up, kiddo! This stuff is just as important, if not more so, and anyway, you don't look like you've had quite enough time in the air to pull yourself out of a suicide dive if you fall asleep and pitch forward off this branch.

Raven's Laws

These aren't laws, really, so much as they are a set of guidelines, but if you break them, rest assured, we'll find out. After all, most of these are common



sense, and if we have no use for anything in this world, it's someone without the brains to come in out of the rain. Such folks are lousy at keeping secrets, much less learning them, so we keep an eye out for ravens who constantly break these guidelines. We know who's got it down and who might be slipping a bit.

Besides, Raven took the time to make them, so it's only respectful to take the time to follow them, don't you think?

There Are No Secrets

Well *duh*! If you haven't gotten anything else out of this little pep talk, please tell me you've picked this up. We go after every secret out there, *every* secret, no matter how dangerous or unpleasant it may be. Anyone with a refrigerator knows that things left in the dark eventually mold into something really nasty. Therefore it's our duty to uncover as many buried secrets as we can before they turn into something even nastier. That also means you'd better chase down every lead you find, even if it seems pretty ludicrous or obscure — no telling what's trash and what's treasure, you know what I mean?

Share What You Know

Here's another no-brainer: If you're the only bird that knows something and you kick off for a dirt nap, that info dies with you, and then who cares what you knew? Anyway, it's a pretty safe bet that you personally won't be able to do much about a lot of the stuff you uncover, but as soon as you drop it in the lap of someone who can — whether it's a Garou raiding party or the local Attorney General's office — you've made sure that *something* will be done, and that's what counts. This isn't just kindly advice either, kid; the sooner you spread the word, the safer you are. Put it to you this way: Say you find out about a Pentex dumping ground and manage to pass this info on to the rather dim but perpetually ticked-off Get of Fenris sept nearby. Who do you think Pentex is going to try to take out first, you or the furry Panzer division that's rolling over their security team? Yeah, I thought so. As soon as you're not the only one who knows something, you've gone to the back of the target line.

Teach Them What They'll Learn

We talk too much. *Mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*. Unfortunately, that means that quite often the very people we need to get the info to disregard our warnings, since they're used to a constant level of chatter from us. "Silence, son of Trickster," "Don't mind him, he's always saying stuff like that," even the ever-popular "Shut the fuck up, birdie!" Sure. As if we had nothing better to do than hang around and chew the fat all day. Anyway, what I'm saying is that you are hereby authorized — no, *ordered* — to use any and all means at your disposal to get your point across. Doesn't matter if it makes you look like a total idiot or gets an entire pack of Garou thirsty for your blood — anything's acceptable as long as you get your message across. We're at war, kid, and that means your pride goes right down the toilet if it means you'll be able to point the other soldiers in the right direction. Start getting prissy and other people start getting dead, understand?



Protect the Eggs

Remember how I said these weren't laws so much as guidelines? Well, I lied — you break this rule, and the best you can hope for is that we'll steal your memories and snub you at the next Parliament. Eggs are our future, and seeing as how we don't have too many to begin with, we can't afford to lose any of the next generation either. Those who swear to guard an egg and fail are deeply shamed and humiliated, no matter what the circumstances might have been. And any fools who actually sell one out to the opposition have their wings torn apart very slowly and are left somewhere where they can die a suitably painful and ignominious death, like the middle of a highway or outside a Bone Gnawer caern on Stew Night. So if you see someone going after a spirit egg, don't hesitate — cap the mofo!

Remember Why You're Here

Repeat after me: I am not death from above, I am a *raven*. Seriously, we are not the frontline soldiers of this war. We're scouts, spies and communications officers, and forgetting that is one of the quickest paths to a permanent retirement. When you're more than human (or bird), it's tempting to think that you can just wander into battle and whup ass. Remember that there are a lot of other supernatural critters who are better-suited to that task than we are. If you pick too many fights, sooner or later you're bound to run into the pointy end of one of them. Only fight if your back is firmly up against the wall, and even then, don't get cocky — most bad guys have backup, and chances are that while you're strutting around in triumph, a whole busload of fresh nasties is speeding in your direction. This doesn't mean you turn chicken every time danger rears its head — if your friends need you, you have my permission to become death with a sharp beak and shiny feathers — but just that you have to remember what we're here for. We don't care who gets credit for the kill, nor are we likely to be the ones to score it; all we care about is that the kill is made in the first place, *comprende*? We recon, we retreat, we report — it's that simple.

Bear Witness

Everyone has a story. *Everyone*. It's our job to make sure as many of them are recorded as possible, and that means you have to keep your eyes and ears open, no matter what. Sounds easy, right? Wait until you see your first Pentex vivisection lab, human concentration camp, serial killing or chemical warfare attack; or worse still, wait until you have to watch a friend get cut down right before your eyes. Part of Raven's deal is that you must never turn away, and it takes its toll after a while, believe me, but it has to be done. If we're the ones responsible for passing on information and we start turning away just because it makes us squeamish, what the hell good are we to anyone? So don't cut corners, don't turn up your nose, and don't *ever* think someone's story isn't important. That's why we drink the eyes of the dead, after all — not only is it a good source of information, but it makes sure the soul rests easier, knowing that someone has heard its story. No one wants to die alone.



The Truth Matters

This should go without saying: Check your sources, verify your information, cross the t's and dot the i's. We have a hard enough time convincing the other Breeds to listen to us as it is; now imagine how much harder it would be if one of us starts getting a reputation for spreading less than accurate information. Don't tell anyone anything unless you have all the facts you need, otherwise imagination starts filling in the gaps and pretty soon you've got a fairy tale instead of an investigative report. And no matter what you do, never, *ever* give bad information to another Corax — we'll forgive you for telling lies to just about anyone else, as long as you don't make a habit of it, but you start fouling our network with falsehoods (especially on purpose) and you'll be lucky to get off with a death sentence. We have enough trouble sifting out bad data on our own to start worrying about whether others of our kind are telling us the straight dope. There's one exception to this rule, of course — don't ever hesitate to tell lies to the agents of the Wyrms, especially if those lies happen to get said agents put in jail or (better yet) killed off. Nobody said you had to play fair with the enemy.

Everything's Part of the Cycle

Judge not lest ye be judged, kid. Gaia has a plan for everything, even if you don't happen to notice what it might be, so keep an open mind and don't make conclusions about things without examining them in the right context. One of the worst things about the War of Rage is that the Garou killed off all kinds of shapechangers, and I can't help but wonder what roles they were supposed to have, you know? I wouldn't be the first to wonder if the world is so out of whack because the wolves kakked a bunch of critters who were supposed to play an important role in balancing it out. So the next time you feel tempted to look down on a particular human as just a polluting little monkey and not a real person, remember that the same monkey might one day see you slurping up some corpse's eyeballs and decide to put a load of shot in you for desecrating a corpse. And no amount of Gaia's sanction is going to shield your butt from a 12-gauge.

Don't Play Favorites

We're lucky as Changing Breeds go; we have both Raven and Helios looking after us, and don't ever forget it. The Big H may not be the most perceptive of Celestines when it comes to trickery, but he's been good to us regardless, and well, Raven is the best, wings down. So make sure you always thank both of them equally, show proper respect to both when you open a Parliament, and otherwise don't do anything to upset this nice little dual sponsorship we have going here.

Fly!

Oh, yeah, did I mention that we're the luckiest beings alive? We've got wings! Use them as often as possible, see everything you can, and talk to absolutely everyone along the way. Taking flight is fun on its own, but it's also symbolic of what we do in general — look at things from a different angle.



Don't waste this potential, because it's a sure thing that no one else around has the same perspective as you do, and if you can't be bothered to look at things in a different way, why'd you bother putting on wings in the first place?

Laugh

Trust me. You have to laugh from time to time, or you'll crack up. There's no two ways about it — with all the crazy, horrible stuff we're exposed to, you'll snap under the strain unless you learn how to sneak a chuckle out every now and again. Look for the humor in everything you can, and remember that a good laugh is usually enough to tide you over until things start looking brighter again. We are of Trickster as much as any other aspect, after all, so if anyone starts giving you lip about your sense of humor, just tell 'em it's part of Gaia's plan and not to meddle in things they don't understand. Take wing while they're still trying to puzzle that out and don't forget to take a little detour over their car on the way out... Heh-heh. See what I mean?

Lessons From On High

Corax Culture

We're a scattered folk, but scattered doesn't mean stupid, nor does it mean antisocial. As a matter of fact, we're entirely too social for our own good, which is why we tend to limit most interaction with others of our kind to brief face-to-faces like this and the occasional Parliament — we'd drive each other nuts otherwise. Still, that doesn't mean we don't have a sense of community, and wherever you have that there's a culture of some kind going on too, so just hang in there and I'll give you a quick idea about some common Corax habits and traditions.

Spirit Eggs

We Corax just don't get together and mate like other Breeds do; no, sir, we took one look at all the trouble the cats and wolves have their inbreds and said, "There has to be a better way than this." So we thought on it for a while and came up with a solution: Why not have two of us get together and put some of our essence into a spirit egg, which we'll then attach to a newborn infant or hatchling? It's all about spirit, after all, not a stupid little thing like genes and chromosomes; what's more, this way we don't have to worry about all those nasty genetic deformities that come from crossing with our own kind. Better still, since the egg will take a while to hatch, the kid has some time to get used to life before he gets hit with the whole shapeshifting bum's rush. When it finally does hatch, believe you me, the cry of the hatchling is loud enough to be heard for miles around in both worlds, so Corax come flapping to make sure nobody arrives to make an omelet out of the new guy. Oh, and to prevent one breed from totally dominating, Raven made sure there had to be one of each breed at the creation of all spirit eggs just so nobody got uppity about there be too many of either kind of us. So now we're nicely balanced,



because neither breed wants the other to die out, but nobody wants too many of the other kind either. Raven's planning triumphs again.

Oh, and if this didn't get through before — spirit eggs are as sacred as sacred gets to us. You fail to protect one, you're going down with it, *capiche*? If a spirit egg is destroyed, the person it was attached to usually dies as well, or at best becomes a hollow, autistic shell, since the spiritual half of her has been irrevocably severed. I've seen one of these lost causes — it breaks your heart. Make sure it never happens on your watch.

The First Year

Like I said, the spirit egg acts as a time-release system of sorts, making sure the fledge has time to grow up a bit and take in the world around her before saturating her with changing juice. That doesn't mean it's easy on us, however — teenagers are difficult enough to live with as it is, so try to imagine talking to one that just grew feathers and a beak for the first time (or flopped to the ground on big clunky human feet, for that matter). Fortunately, because of the call of the spirit egg, one of us is almost always there to help guide the newcomer through, just like I'm doing for you now. Maybe someday you'll be putting a fledge through his paces yourself, Gaia willing. Don't get too comfy, though — we're a busy breed and don't take well to slow learners. Our "apprenticeships" seldom last more than a month or two at most, long enough to give a rundown on basic history and social practices, and then the fledge is left to fly or flop on her own. For her first year other Corax will keep an eye on her and try to make sure she doesn't get herself killed, but other than that she's left with her own talents to get her by. We believe in finding things out for ourselves, after all, and taking a fledge by the hand and guiding them through everything just isn't our style. Of course, if a fledge is smart enough to find a teacher and ask the right questions, she can learn a great deal from us older ravens, but the idea is to make sure she understands she has to earn it on her own.

Drinking Eyes

Don't try making a disgusted face; ravens don't do it very well, for one, and you just look silly anyway. We drink from the eyes of the dead because we have to, because it's a sacred duty to record their final moments and because it gives us all kinds of useful information to work with besides. Just hop on up to the corpse, ask it nicely and dig in, and you'll be treated with all the stuff it saw in the last few moments of its life. Remember, though, most ravens only get to use one eye in this fashion — left eye sees everything from the worst possible angle, right eye in the best possible light. Of course, sometimes nature or the circumstances of a poor sucker's death make the choice for you, but otherwise you have to use your head and ask which one will be a more useful learning experience. Just try not to drink too many of the same kind in a row — too many positive visions of death and you're liable to get careless; too many negative ones and you'll put the bullet there yourself. Be respectful, be



observant and most of all do your best to help put the body's spirit to rest if you can. Crows aren't the only ones looking out for the unhappy souls of the dead, after all — we just let them get all the publicity for it.

Parliament Flockadelic

Ah, yes, Parliament time, when all the Corax who can stand to be in one place at one time get together and work some serious secret-sharing mojo. You'll know when a legitimate invite to a Parliament arrives — others have tried to set up ambushes in the past by sending out fake invitations, but they just never feel right to us — and usually the only excuses for not attending are death or banishment to some Deep Umbral Realm. Besides, with all the good dirt that gets shared at those things, you'd be stupid not to attend. Since we're down with Helios and all that, we hold our moots during the daytime; it also helps reduce the numbers of would-be eavesdroppers, since apparently none of the supernatural geniuses in the world ever expect anything of consequence to happen during the daytime. Anyway, we find the tallest tree we can and situate ourselves around the host, who's also known as the Minister of Parliament for reasons too laborious and obscure to go into now. Since it's in a tree, these are Corvid form only shindigs, understand? There's also always a bit of Renown-based squabbling over who gets to sit on the highest branches. (Yes, it is bad to sit on the bottom. Think about it.) Then the host calls out thanks to Raven and Helios for giving us the wits to dig up secrets and the light by which to find them, and the moot is underway.

Procedure's actually pretty straightforward, no matter where you are. First, there's the roll call. No, not of the ravens there — we know who *they* are, after all — but the ones that got an invite and still didn't show. Anybody who's seen one of the missing lately and knows they're okay pipes up at this point, and if nobody does, then we organize a search party for after the moot and get ready to mourn another fallen raven, since all too often that's the case. (We *really* don't skip out on Parliaments very often.) Next is an egg check — the local guardians speak up and let us know how they're doing. Hopefully this is a short part, because if all's going well there isn't much to say. Then mentors or parents introduce any new fledges to the assembled Corax, and the fledges have to pass a quiz or go to the bottom rows. Don't look so scared, it's not hard at all as long as you've paid attention while I was talking to you. Still scared? Heh. Then that's your fault, not mine.

Last but surely not least is the old/new information time, where everyone shares what they've learned since the last Parliament. Now, the oldest and wisest of us — like me — are allotted their own time to speak, since everybody knows that what we have to say is of *mucho* importance to all Corax in general, but after we're done, everyone else starts talking more or less at once and you have to really fight to make yourself heard. But fight you must, kid, because this is usually the one and only time we award Renown, and if you're shy or get caught napping, chances are that you're going to have to wait quite a while



before you get another chance to earn any. So speak up, and if what you have to say is really important, you *will* be heard. It just works out that way.

Parliaments end at sundown, out of respect for Helios and all. When they're almost over, we take wing over whatever city or town we're near and fly around it in smaller and smaller circles, calling out everything we see along the way. Ideally, we hit the center of town right as the last of the sunlight slips under the horizon. Then we go our separate ways, or — often as not these days — go somewhere and have a beer. Sound like fun? Good. Because you may now consider yourself invited to the next one. Where? Be patient, kid, the place will come to you soon enough.

Camps

We Ravens all tend to do our own thing, but sometimes we come together for a little while, united by common cause, common ancestry, or even just our own similar sense of curiosity. These groups — dubbed “murders” by Garou who can't keep their crows and ravens straight — don't usually stay together long given our propensity for working solo, but they sometimes last for quite a while, and there are even a couple of groups that have kept going for a couple of generations or so, based on a combination of tradition and popularity. Most of these groups don't offer any particular benefits for joining — it's more of a social club than anything else — but members do get a sense of belonging that can be in short supply among our kind, and I guess that's good for something. At any rate, if you fall in with one of these groups, be nice to them — they're as close to friends as you'll have, especially in the sky.

The Sun-Lost

These guys aren't really a group so much as a collection of those Corax who decide they've had enough with this pokey old world of ours and kiss it good-bye once and for all, choosing to adventure into the Umbra instead. Most of the time we never see these folks again, although occasionally they'll stop to rest in a closer area of the Umbra than normal; should you ever come across one, be on your best behavior and be prepared for some absolutely amazing stories. If you ever get a message from one, trust me, you, and you alone, were the intended recipient, and it's generally best to heed their advice — they've seen far more than many of us ever will and have acquired a reputation for prophecy for good reason. Even if we never see or hear from them again, we always know when one of them dies; a single feather appears at their hatching place. That's a sad day for us all, because even if they chose to cut out of this war we're fighting, they're still family, and therefore too precious to let go of easily.

The Morrigan

The three First Ladies of Mass Mayhem, the Morrigan are selected by Raven to preside over the greatest battles of the Garou, calling out auguries and feasting on the eyes of the slain. No one knows the selection criteria, but once a Corax (always female, obviously) is chosen, she's in for life, and she's



never quite the same, either. They take one of the traditional names of the Morrigan — Bebd, Nemain and Morrighu — and that's it, a complete break from their old life. I ran across them once, and believe you me, they're not anyone you'd ever want to mess with. They have this cold light in their eyes, and anyone who crosses them winds up in a world of hurt, even if the Morrigan never lay a finger on them. Brrr. Bad luck, that's what I say, but they have their role under Gaia too, so the best course is to just leave them be.

Murder's Daughters

Pardon this chauvinist old bird for a moment, but these ladies are everything that's wrong with young shapechangers these days. They're loud, they're obnoxious, they'll fight anyone at the drop of a hat, and they tend to forget little things like spreading secrets and uncovering lore in favor of tending their own personal glory — you know, their *purpose*. Each and every one of them wants to be promoted to the ranks of the Morrigan one day, and even though no one's ever heard of one actually getting the nod, they keep trying. The way they try to earn Raven's eye is, naturally, by proving their combat prowess at every possible chance and otherwise acting far too antisocial for anyone's good. Oh, and no boys allowed — this is strictly a girls' club and has been as far back as anyone knows. Scary part is, most of these sisters are more than capable of backing up their threats and will make hash out of you and everyone dear to you if they think you're steppin' to them. My advice? Do the same as you would with the Morrigan, and just stay the hell away from them.

Hermetic Order of Swift Light

"Corax Incorporated" has a nice ring to it, eh? Well, that's basically what the Order is — a first-class courier service and worldwide information network based out of a slick high-rise in midtown Manhattan, where virtually anything the Corax know is available for the correct price. (That's right, *virtually* anything; do you actually think we're dumb enough to sell vital secrets back to the Wyrms or keep the locations of our spirit eggs on a handy floppy disk somewhere? *Please.*) By tradition, only one actual member of the Breed works there, although most of the employees are Kin in the know, and a lot of us pick up freelance work as couriers and stringers from time to time. Ownership trades hands frequently, usually as part of a trade for some big secret or powerful fetish, and it's not uncommon to see three or four different Corax run the business in the course of a year. So far it hasn't hurt business one bit — the initial IPO went through the roof, and profits have risen steadily every year. Right now, there's talk of a permanent leadership structure coming in, as well as an extensive electronic backup system, but we'll have to see. In the meantime, the Order enjoys a reputation for excellence of information that would make the sneakiest vampires jealous.

Chasers

Yeah, sure, I like the *X-Files* as much as anyone else — lots of entertaining fiction there, not to mention the occasional nugget of truth for the truly



dedicated — but these kids take it way too far. Chaser murders are basically a bunch of young Corax who get together, *Scooby Doo* style, to investigate everything even remotely paranormal they can find, with the stranger the experience the better. That's fine in itself, but the trouble is that most Chasers tend to get caught up in the moment and decide they're going to actually confront the vampire-wereshark monster or exorcise the house full of ghosts by themselves, and that's the kind of stuff where you start losing little ones, you know what I mean? Fortunately, most get bored with each other and take off after a little while, but some do come away with the most incredible stories....

Other Changers

What, you thought Gaia put us down on this rock without some company? If you were paying any attention before — and I hope you were, if only for your own sake at the next Parliament — you've picked up on the fact that there are a bunch of other critters out there who can change shape like we do, although I must point out that we're the only crew that gets the whole flight-and-feathers deal. Yeah, there's a whole menagerie of others out there, only chances are you won't see many of the others too often because the Garou kind of killed most of them off a while ago. Even if there's supposed to be a peace treaty in place, most of these guys aren't dumb enough to stick their necks out to see if the Garou really mean it this time. Not that I blame them, either.

Still, as distasteful as it can be to remember, we are all kin, even to the sharks and the rats, and when everyone can put aside all the old B.S., we can get some pretty amazing stuff done.

The Garou Tribes

We've had a long history with the Garou, for better or worse, and seeing as how they're the most common changers left on the planet these days, they get their own special tribe-by-tribe treatment. Remember this if you see one: not only are the wolves generally a touchy lot to be around, but some tribes will give you a hug and a hello while others will try to pluck your feathers without asking nicely first. What's the kicker? They almost all look alike to the rest of us! Sound like fun? Welcome to the world of dealing with the Garou.

Black Furies — These warrior women do a lot of honest, caring, down-to-earth kind of stuff: running shelters, protecting women in need, you name it. Unfortunately, some of their younger ones have a tendency to buy into the tribe's own PR and try to come off as the man-hating bacchante-style crazy folks that gave this tribe such a bad rep in the first place. That's a shame, because it really overshadows the ones who do the work that needs doing.

Bone Gnawers — These dirty doggies think they know absolutely everything that goes on in the city, and that no one else is hip to their game yet. Hell-o? Ever think about looking up, geniuses? We learn everything the Bone Gnawers do just because they're such old city dwellers they never bother



to crane their necks a little, and they've never even guessed that we're there. Oh, well. Suits us fine — free info! Maybe some day they'll wise up and we'll have to make a deal, but until then...

Children of Gaia — What a nice, caring, honest and open bunch of wolves. Anyone else sense a paradox in that sentence? Seriously, the Children have always been the voice of reason among their kind, but it's a small voice and doesn't tend to do much good when slaughter is in the air. They need a plan — and I mean a global one — before they'll do much good. As it is now, they're just tilting at big fuzzy windmills.

Fianna — The bad part is that they tend to embody the worst things in the Garou race: mindless violence, endless feuds and a predilection for the "we're right and you're wrong" mindset that makes the wolves so annoying. The good part is that we figure prominently in a lot of their legends, so we can usually talk them out of doing something really stupid by appealing to their sense of tradition.

Get of Fenris — Another tribe that has a whole lot of respect for Raven, and so they treat us nice and try not to break our bones if they can avoid it. Of course, play games with these Nordic types and it might happen anyway. They're not so bad if you keep them off the topic of politics or their place in Gaia's plan, and they will often go out of their way to invite us to their parties so we can regale them with stories of the good old days of Huginn and Munin.

Glass Walkers — Furry vampires, that's all they are, trying to get the best of the primitive and the modern at once. They can do some neat tricks with computers but otherwise don't waste your time.

Red Talons — Talon hunt. Talon kill. Talon tell you where the body is. Sometimes they'll ask you for recon on their enemies, but that's about it. Otherwise, so long as you don't make a dog joke within two miles of one, you should be safe.

Shadow Lords — Sneaky wolves plotting and scheming in the dark, making speeches into the air about how one day they'll rule the world and make everyone else pay for looking down on them, etc., etc. Trouble is, they're not half as sneaky as they like to think, and so we know what's going down in their neck of the woods, but what's even worse, the Lords actually *like* what we do. They're ever so nice to us, know the right questions to ask and generally receive us a whole lot better than the rest of their lupine cousins. So what's going on — are they playing us, or are they for real? I don't know, but I have a feeling we'll find out all too soon.

Silent Striders — Fun to play tag with, because they'll show you all kinds of strange places you'd never find on your own; most of them are glad for a little company on their trails too, so a gossip swap is usually possible, and they see a *lot* as they wander. Some of the only wolves who know when to shut up and do their job, and I respect them for that. Just watch out for the ghosts they tend to attract — that scene can get nasty really fast.



Silver Fangs — Ouch. Watching the shining leaders of the Garou crash and burn over time has been nothing but painful, because they used to be so strong, so noble. Now, though, the whole tribe's been overcome by their own insistence on only breeding with the best of the best, and so even the greatest of them have a few faulty connections in their wiring, if you know what I mean. Maybe they might get the troops together for one final charge, but more likely not. Sad.

Stargazers — If you want the long view of the wolf nation, visit one of these guys: they're intelligent — disciplined as opposed to fanatical — and willing to debate all kinds of theories about the way the world is headed. Problem is, they're also very, very rare and tend to get so caught up in their little thought games and mind puzzles that they lose track of what's going on around them. Annoying over lunch, fatal in battle. But if you can put up with the occasional long pause or rumination on the dharmic singularity of the peach tree, you're set.

Uktena — Can't hurt to have another crew that gives props to Raven, and therefore these wolves earn our trust in spades. They know all kinds of cool magical secrets, too, and will usually share if you ask them nicely and can relate the location of a good fetish or powerful Wyrms-critter that needs dealing with. Just watch out — sometimes their little ones try to out-Trickster us, and while their pranks are usually pretty clever, they don't know when to quit and tend to react with the usual Garou composure when you finally pull one over on them. Other than that, great guys.

Wendigo — As ashamed as I am about how the second War of Rage happened, it's history, and these wolves need to get with the times. They're fantastic warriors and noble to the core, but defeat has made them bitter and turned their weapons against other Garou instead of the Wyrms-creatures that so need spanking. Not that they want our advice, of course. Oh, well. Their loss.

Everybody Else

Hard as they tried, the Garou couldn't quite stomp out the other Breeds, and I think we meet with just about all of them eventually in the course of our investigations. Here's the skinny:

Ananasi — I once heard all about this strange hostage situation they had going on with the Wyrms, the Weaver, the Wyld, Gaia, Luna, the seven dwarves... you get the idea. Point is, nobody knows whose side they're on anymore, and they seem to spend as much time fighting each other as anyone else. So until they make up their minds, we'll steer clear, thank you very much.

Bastet — Birds and cats have never been especially chummy — imagine that — and while these guys have some skill at the secret-gathering biz, they're not real good at sharing, and what's worse they tend to inject their opinion into what they *do* share. That's not a good trait for scouts to have, but have you ever tried getting a cat to do anything but what they want to do? Tread lightly around the cats and make sure to double-check anything they tell you, just in case.



Gurahl — Not many of the bears left these days, and the ones that are around tend to hibernate half the time, waiting for... what? Better days? I don't know, but regardless the tribe isn't doing a great deal. When they do act, however, they show the wisdom they're famous for, and we have to respect that. I just wish they'd put the wolves back in their place again.

Kitsune — Hmm. Only the Tengu know more than the standard "mischievous fox-types" line, and they aren't telling. It'd be great to add another, smarter member to the family tree in this neck of the woods, so I hope that whatever deal the Tengu and the foxes are working out gets finished soon. Until then, be careful — regular foxes have been known to swipe eggs from time to time, and nobody knows how their bigger cousins look at fine cuisine.

Mokolé — Even more than the bears, the Mokolé have retreated from the world since the War of Rage, and that's a bad thing, because they were supposed to act as the memory of the Changing Breeds, and without them we tend to lose track of the big picture. Every time I see the kind of shortsighted plans the others make, I have to wonder what would be done if the Mokolé were around to advise them as well. As it is, they've asked for privacy, and we give it to them.

Nagah — The snake-changers are dead. Sure. Like I can shoot frogs from my posterior. Seriously, we don't know where they've gotten to — they were always good at the stealthy bit, damn 'em — but every once in a while something turns up with their signature all over it, even if the other Breeds don't notice. So if you manage to find out what their deal is, you're gonna make a big splash in our circles — assuming you don't contract a case of poison death along the way, of course.

Nuwisha — We share an aspect in common — we're both Trickster's Children, after all — and the fun has been pretty much nonstop since the beginning. They tend to take things a little less seriously than we'd like, and they tend to see us as being too serious when we should be joking, but that's about it. Otherwise we're twins at heart, and if you ever need to really unwind, look one of them up. You won't be disappointed.

Ratkin — Icky icky icky. We're claustrophobic and tend to be proud of what the humans have accomplished; they're tunnel dwellers who like to end human lives for fun and profit. This combination tends to keep them out of our sight, though, and that — combined with their rabid hatred of Garou, humans and surface dwellers in general — makes them *dangerous*. There are a lot more of them down there than the others think, and some time soon they're going to blow up in our faces. Let's just hope we can find out exactly what they've got planned before we wind up on the sharp end of it, eh?

Rokea — They see everything under the sea, a territory we can't normally cover. That's good. They tend to eat everything that comes near them, including us. That's bad. They're willing to talk (as long as we stay comfortably out of reach). That's good. But they're pissed at land-walkers in general, and planning some major shorefront strikes in the near future. That's very, very bad.



The Kitchen Sink (Or What's Living Under It)

Now, if you've been listening *really* closely, you'll notice that I've mentioned other things that go bump in the night, and I'm not talking about the closet monster you were afraid of when you were six — or maybe I am. When it comes to the other supernatural creatures stomping around, remember that they have their own societies, their own rules and most of all their own unique views on outsiders like us, some of which include vivisection and recipes for raven with rice pilaf. Enter their games at your own risk; just tell us all the good stuff if you do.

Vampires — We're down with Helios, and that pretty much screws any chance of ever getting too buddy-buddy with these Bela Lugosi wannabes. Trouble is, their immortality gives them plenty of time to construct plans that cover every possible loophole and contingency, and *The Usual Suspects* has nothing on these guys when it comes to the whole rampant paranoia and surprise double-cross theme. So if you think you've foiled their latest scheme, do yourself a favor and check to make sure you haven't actually moved them three steps forward for the one step you put them back. And even if you do mess them up, watch your back — unless you've ashed the corpse once and for all, he has all the time in the world to think of how to get back at you.

Wizards — These guys think they know everything — even more so than the Garou — and what's worse, they're always trying to kill each other over who's got the right point of view, and don't care much about the collateral damage that happens along the way. Here's a clue for you, kids — *none* of you are totally right! Sure, they've got oodles of secrets to share, but it's seldom worth the risk to find out, because you'll never know when a troop of killer robots or a swarm of fire pixies is going to try to kakk your informant. If you can deal with that, by all means go ahead, but *be careful!*

Faeries — We don't see them much, and the others tend to brush them off as inconsequential artsy types, but I'm not so sure. Art is culture, after all, and culture is what turns the wheel of history, so those who have power over the artists have a lot more influence than you might think. Could the faeries have pulled such a prank that no one thinks they matter, then laughed all the way to the world? It's worth checking into, that's for sure....

Ghosts — We've had a lot to do with dead folks in the past, what with drinking the eyes of corpses and all, and I have to admit they're a good source of information; most of them have nothing else to do but watch the living, they can usually tell when someone's about to check out, and they're usually really desperate to talk to anyone still in the living world. They always want something in return, though, whether it's your run-of-the-mill "Tell my wife I love her" or something more complicated, and failure to comply will bring all sorts of trouble down on your head. Be careful what bargains you make with them, and always remember that the Dark Umbra is a bad place to be no matter what.



Breed

• **Corvid:** Born and raised as a raven, you lived a pretty ordinary life until the spirit egg hatched. Now your whole world has changed, and you'll never go back.

Restricted Abilities: *Computer, Drive, Finance, Firearms, Law, Medicine, Politics, Repair, Science*

Nickname: Birdies

Bonus Ability: *Flight x 2*

• **Homid:** Although you were always something of a hyperactive chatterbox, the realization of what lay behind these traits didn't strike until your First Change.

Nickname: Groundlings

Restricted Abilities: *Flight, Primal Urge*

Renown Traits

Wisdom: *Clever, Crafty, Inspired, Inventive, Pragmatic, Profound, Respected, Revered, Sacred, Scholarly, Spiritual, Venerable, Wise*

Honor: *Admirable, Commendable, Dutiful, Eminent, Esteemed, Fair, Honorable, Impartial, Just, Noble, Objective, Proud, Reputable, Trusted, Virtuous*

Glory: *Bold, Brash, Brave, Courageous, Daring, Exalted, Feared, Fearless, Fierce, Glorious, Imposing, Impressive, Spirited, Superb*

Breeds

Thanks to the great amount of spiritual energy it takes to create a new Corax, the Breed has never been common, and this is especially true in this day and age. The birth of every Corax is a special and celebrated event. Due to the demands of the breeding rite, there can be no metis Corax, so the prejudices and traditions associated with those tragic inbreds are unknown to Corax society. Because they share such a small community and focus of purpose, there are very few social distinctions between the two breeds; after all, who has time to argue about petty things like genetic ancestry when all are servants of Raven and (more importantly) everybody's got a job to do?

A Question of Lineage

Corax really have two sets of parents — the biological ones who birthed and raised her physical form and the Corax pair who performed the original rite that created their Spirit Egg. This is not to say there can't be some crossover — some elder ravens create a Spirit Egg within their own biological child — but needless to say, questions of lineage are haphazard things at best for most Corax. The ravens do not spend nearly the same amount of energy researching bloodlines and pedigrees that the Garou and some other changers do — to the Corax, it doesn't matter if your ancestor was a great and wonderful Corax or a lowly bent-winged raven, it's what you do with *your* life that really matters.



Character Creation

Character Creation Process

- **Step One: Character Concept** — Who and what are you?
 - Choose Nature and Demeanor
 - Choose a breed (homid or corvid)
- **Step Two: Select Attributes** — What are your basic capabilities?
 - Prioritize Trait Attributes (seven primary, five secondary and three tertiary)
 - Choose Traits
- **Step Three: Select Advantages** — What do you know and what can you do?
 - Choose five Abilities
 - Choose three Basic Gifts
 - Choose five Backgrounds
 - Note Renown (2 Wisdom Traits and one other Trait of your choice)
- **Step Four: Finishing Touches** — Fill in the details.
 - Record Rage (1), Gnosis (4) & Willpower (2)
 - Choose Negative Traits (if any)
 - Select Merits and/or Flaws, if desired (see page 83)
 - Record Raven's Gifts (a free level each of the Dodge, Enigmas and Subterfuge Abilities)
- **Step Five: Spark of Life** — Narrative descriptions and other details

Natures and Demeanors

For complete descriptions, see *Laws of the Wild*.

Architect, Avant-Garde, Bravo, Bureaucrat, Caregiver, Competitor, Confidant, Conformist, Conmirer, Critic, Curmudgeon, Deviant, Director, Explorer, Fanatic, Gallant, Gambler, Jester, Judge, Loner, Martyr, Penitent, Predator, Rebel, Reluctant Corax, Reveler, Showoff, Survivor, Traditionalist, Visionary.



Rage, Gnosis & Willpower

All Corax begin with the following Traits, regardless of breed.

Initial Willpower: 2

Initial Gnosis: 4

Initial Rage: 1

Attributes

For complete Trait descriptions, see **Laws of the Wild**.

Physical: Athletic, Bravery, Brutal, Dexterous, Enduring, Energetic, Ferocious, Graceful, Lithe, Nimble, Quick, Resilient, Robust, Rugged, Stalwart, Steady, Tenacious, Tireless, Tough, Vigorous, Wiry

Social: Alluring, Beguiling, Charismatic, Charming, Commanding, Compassionate, Dignified, Diplomatic, Elegant, Eloquent, Empathetic, Expressive, Friendly, Genial, Gorgeous, Ingratiating, Intimidating, Magnetic, Persuasive, Seductive, Witty

Mental: Alert, Attentive, Calm, Clever, Creative, Cunning, Dedicated, Determined, Discerning, Disciplined, Insightful, Intuitive, Knowledgeable, Observant, Patient, Rational, Reflective, Shrewd, Vigilant, Wily, Wise

Abilities

For complete Ability descriptions, see **Laws of the Wild**.

Animal Ken, Athletics, Brawl, Bureaucracy, Computer, Dodge, Drive, Empathy, Enigmas, Expression, Finance, Firearms, Flight, Intimidation, Investigation, Law, Leadership, Linguistics, Lore, Medicine, Meditation, Melee, Occult, Performance, Primal Urge, Repair, Scrounge, Security, Stealth, Survival

Homid

Most homid Corax have known there's something odd about themselves for as long as they can remember, but until the First Change came along they were never quite able to put their finger on it — the Change, in fact, usually comes just in time to save the young fledge from really going around the bend. From birth, most of these Corax have been incessant talkers and even more incessant questioners, though their curiosity seldom lingers on anything for very long. Always skinny and often a little on the short side as well, most fledges would have made perfect bully fodder during their formative years save for their fleet feet or, failing that, their talent for blackmail, which is always light-years beyond the capability of the adults around them. As adults, Corax tend to prize professions that allow them a great deal of freedom to travel, not



to mention dig up some secrets — couriers, reporters, treasure hunters and gossip columnists are among the most favored occupations.

While they do not usually display nearly as many of the birdlike mannerisms of their corvid relatives, most Corax carry over at least one or two little habits and many have at least a mild level of kleptomania when it comes to shiny objects. Corax of European descent also tend to be less tied down to a particular place, while Native American ravens tend to stay with and protect the community they were raised among, but these differences are by no means universal. In any event, homid Corax may take longer to adjust to some of the daily realities of Corax life, but their grasp of modern information systems quickly makes up for any deficiencies they may have in the air.

Backgrounds

For complete Background descriptions, see **Laws of the Wild**.
Fetish, Influence, Kinfolk, Past Life, Rites, Secrets, Umbral Maps

Negative Traits

For complete descriptions of these Traits, see **Laws of the Wild**.

Physical Negative Traits: Clumsy, Cowardly, Decrepit, Delicate, Docile, Flabby, Lame, Lethargic, Piny, Sickly

Social Negative Traits: Callous, Condescending, Dull, Naïve, Obnoxious, Paranoid, Repugnant, Shy, Tactless, Untrustworthy

Mental Negative Traits: Forgetful, Gullible, Ignorant, Impatient, Oblivious, Predictable, Shortsighted, Submissive, Witless

Corvid

Those Corax born of bird stock typically experience their First Change after the first eight or ten months of life, after which time they live normal human life spans. Most of these ravens use this span to the fullest, delighting in the extra advantages offered by their human form while exhibiting a quality of perception and gracefulness in the air that homid Corax can only wonder at. Of course, there are negative qualities as well — many corvid Corax tend to be a bit on the exclusive side, forming cliques among themselves like their normal relatives do in the wild. They can be downright rude to their homid cousins, dismissing them as little more than airborne wannabes. Most also exhibit a high degree of the natural raven tendency to pilfer shiny objects. Needless to say, this can lead to all sorts of problems when it comes to dealing with the human world, since those objects — keys, watches, rings, etc. — usually have a great deal of value to the human holding them!



Corvid Corax are also noted for their disdain for human speech. While they will adopt it if need be, most are very vocal about what they think are the superior intricacies of raven speech. Don't be misled, however — corvids are some of the most capable spies in the Breed. When it comes to sharing secrets with their fellows they are eager informants indeed, if only to put the homids in their place!

Forms

Corax have only three forms, unlike most of their changing cousins. While they switch between the two ends of the spectrum quite often, most Corax avoid the middle shape as much as possible. They avoid it so much, in fact, that even other changers who are fairly knowledgeable in the ways of the raven-folk will deny that such a shape exists. This is a mixed blessing at best, for while it spares the Corax a good amount of embarrassment, it also can lead to some dangerous mix-ups as Garou packs mistake the Crinos Corax for a particularly repulsive fomor.

Homid

Same as any other person, except all Corax are almost painfully thin, with powerful muscles stretched over their lean frames. Their bones, while not actually hollow, are far lighter than normal, giving them a head start toward generating lift in their other forms. (Hey, not many people built like Jesse Ventura can get themselves off the ground!) Most have dark hair and pale skin, which when combined with their thin physique can occasionally cause some confusion for eager vampire hunters who spot the unfortunate Corax. Oh, and dark eyes are nearly universal among the breed — they're considered a mark of Raven's blessing, and Corax without them are considered slightly odd by their fellows.

Crinos/Rara Avis

Unlike the Garou, very few Corax use this form — a crude amalgam of bird and human — with any regularity as they consider it awkward and ungainly. In Crinos form, a Corax has feathers instead of hair, her face elongates into something resembling a beak, and her feet curve into wicked talons. Her arms stretch into wings cov-





ered in oily feathers, and while the hands are not completely absorbed, they do curl into a gnarled, clawlike form. The Crinos form is capable of flight, even though it retains the Homid body mass, although it is considered far less maneuverable than the Corvid form. Most Corax are mortified to be seen using this form, especially by other Corax, and will only use it for last-ditch defensive or intimidation purposes. Finally, their beak-mouth prevents complicated human speech, and when combined with their initial dislike of this form, tends to make them clipped conversationalists (for Corax) when in Rara Avis. Raven speech is unaffected.

Corvid

A normal-seeming raven, although many Corax are somewhat larger than their regular cousins, even up to twice their size. (Average wing span: four and a half feet.) The Corax's sense of vision is greatly enhanced in this form, and most of them can easily rival their eagle cousins for visual acuity. Corax experience no personality change, though the ease of spying that this form provides often prods their natural curiosity and their tendency to snatch up sparkly objects. Corax may communicate with ravens easily in this form; after all, now they're just another member of the flock.

The Good Stuff

Alone as they are among their fellow changers in their ability to fly, it only follows that the Corax gain a number of similarly unique advantages as part of the deal that comes with the spirit egg. Of all these blessings, the most treasured is easily the ability to fly, although their enhanced senses come in a close second. Not that the Corax play favorites, really — they're just grateful for the deal Raven got them in the first place!

Flight

All Corax have one major advantage over their fellow changers and the rest of the mob in general: They can fly! Obviously, only Corvid or Crinos ravens can take wing, but still, that's a damn sight better than everyone else gets, so few Corax complain. Even Corax without the *Flight* Ability are capable of flying, although such poor birds can only manage basic, awkward flapping. A Corax may fly for up to a solid hour without tiring, land on ordinary surfaces without trouble and reach an altitude of up to 1,000 feet — these feats are instinctual and require no Ability knowledge to perform. However, anything more complicated — aerial acrobatics, dive bombing, perching safely during a hurricane, etc. — will require an Ability Test to perform. Of course, having such a wonderful blessing means that most Corax make the most of it whenever possible — a Corax who hasn't taken wing around the neighborhood at least once a week or so is bound to get surly and irritable.

Due to the light skeletons that flight requires, all Corax also receive the Negative Physical Trait *Delicate*, even in Homid form.



All corvid Corax automatically begin with two free levels of the *Flight* Ability to reflect the time they've already had to practice taking wing. Homid Corax, on the other hand, are another story entirely.

Trait Adjustments From Shapeshifting

Homid: None.

Crinos/Rara Avis: *Attentive, Discerning, Nimble, Observant, Tireless, Wry.* Negative Traits: *Bestial* x 2 and *Tactless*.

Corvid: *Alert, Attentive, Discerning, Nimble, Observant.* Negative Traits: *Bestial* x 2, *Delicate, Punny.*

Altered Senses

Gaia intended the Corax to be spies, and as such they need every advantage they can get in the sensory department; those who routinely take in the view from several hundred feet off the ground need good eyesight if they're going to come up with better reports than: "So the red squiggly stood next to the blurry green dot, then went into a little blue rectangle and stayed there. Wait, no, it was a brown rectangle. I think." Thus, all Corax have exceptional eyesight — roughly equivalent to an eagle's when airborne — and are two Traits up on all challenges involving visual perception. (Note: This does not usually include combat, even firearms, unless the Narrator specifically allows it.) In addition, Corax have a certain natural talent for putting together all the things they see. Once per story, a Corax may call for a free retest directly pertaining to uncovering a secret, as their keen noses for sensing the heart of the mystery guide them in the right direction.

Unfortunately, when you pack so many sensory nerves in one spot, you don't have quite so many left over when it comes time to take care of the other senses, and Corax are notably deficient when it comes to their sense of smell. For a race that snacks on roadkill, this is no doubt useful in its own way. Regardless, Corax are two Traits down all tests related to smell.

Eye-Drinking

Sounds yucky, right? It also happens to be one of the most sacred duties of the Corax, and it often provides incredibly valuable information for a raven's investigation, so even the most squeamish birds eventually get over their distaste. The actual mechanics of it work something like this: First of all, the Corax must get the permission of the body before taking an eye; this requires no special Gift, just a simple spoken request. Most bodies agree, as it may help put their spirits to rest, but politeness is definitely a plus — after all, the body has nothing to lose by refusing a request, either. This response usually comes in the form of a comfortable feeling or other subtle impression, and once permission is granted, the Corax must enter Corvid form and make a



Static Mental Challenge against four Traits. If successful, the Corax may drink from one eye and gain a vision of the last moments of a corpse's life. This vision takes a turn to run its course (though it may seem like much longer than that) and comes in the form of a series of incredibly intense images from the victim's point of view. Receiving a corpse's last vision takes the entirety of the Corax's attention, and they are at a two-Trait penalty on all tests for the duration of the vision.

Only one eye may be taken per corpse. The left eye provides a vision of the worst part of the death, while the right eye shows the best part of the death. This means that most of the time the Corax has a somewhat lopsided view of the events leading up to the victim's death and must puzzle out what happened as best she can. This talent isn't limited to human corpses — a good deal of interesting information can often be gained from animals as well. Obviously, for this blessing to be effective there must be some part of the eye left to drink in the first place, so truly mangled corpses may be partially or entirely beyond the Corax's powers at the Narrator's discretion. Finally, Corax may keep a portion of the eye with them for up to a week, and thus share the vision intact with other Corax (let's just say the phrase regurgitating information had to come from somewhere).

The Not-So-Good Stuff

Of course, even Raven can't get his children a pot of goodies without having to pay in return, and there are some inherent weaknesses that all Corax must live with. Most ravens consider this a small price to pay for the gift of flight, so even these burdens are borne with a good amount of humor and grace.

Sparklies!

Ravens are attracted to all manner of shiny objects, and for the Corax this fascination even extends to things that might be dangerous for them to handle, including gold. While they do not blindly pick up baubles in the middle of bear traps, Corax are suckers for beautiful jewelry, lost keys and even oddly shaped pieces of metal. Whenever a Corax is confronted by a particularly shiny, large or interesting-looking object, she must make a Static Willpower Challenge against six Traits or spend a Willpower Trait to avoid giving the object at least a cursory visible examination. (Most Corax will pick up the item if they can and give it a once-over that way.) This is a minor but constant annoyance to the Corax and should be roleplayed accordingly; a player needn't agonize and test over every trinket but should simply roleplay her character's interest as often as possible and save the real tests for important items and other dramatic moments.



Blabbermouthing

Most other changers believe that the Corax are physically incapable of keeping their mouths shut. This isn't quite true, but most Corax do love to hear themselves talk and keep up a constant banter that can be extremely irritating for those around them, even those folks (like other shapeshifters) who realize that the Corax are usually slipping some really good dirt into their conversations. This is a double-edged sword — it keeps the wheels of Corax society turning as the ravens trade tales and swap secrets among each other at a fairly frenzied pace, but the sheer amount of verbiage also tends to make it hard for the Corax to be taken seriously, since most people ignore their outlandish statements or even tune them out after a while. What's worse, Corax hate to repeat themselves, and while this makes for shorter Parliaments among their own kind, when talking to outsiders they're bound to run out of small talk eventually, meaning that they're liable to let slip some things they really shouldn't just to keep the conversation going. Corax are therefore one Trait down on all challenges involving keeping quiet, holding their tongues or otherwise refraining from speaking. (Yes, this includes Willpower Tests to avoid getting one last dig in at the frothing Get of Fenris that has just been brought down from a fit of raging homicidal mania.) Naturally, this can get them in all kinds of trouble pretty quickly.

This is not to say that Corax must *always* be talking; those players who try to pass off a nonstop hyper-garrulous state as "just being in character" risk inviting the ire of annoyed Storytellers and fellow players alike, and with good cause. Players should look at the Corax gift of gab as the inability to stop talking once they get started, to let anyone else have the last word, to keep a secret that's *really really* neat, or to avoid getting off that one last one-liner.

Gold and Silver

Due to their relation to Helios, Corax are *not* affected by silver, but suffer the same consequences from gold instead. Direct contact with gold in Corvid or Rara Avis form causes a level of aggravated damage per turn, and even in Homid form the Corax is extremely uncomfortable around gold and will naturally refrain from carrying it or wearing any gold jewelry. Regardless of their current form, they suffer aggravated damage from weapons forged of gold (not simply inlaid or decorated with gold, but ones in which the majority of the weapon itself is pure gold) the same as Garou do from silver weapons, and suffer the same Gnosis penalty for every gold object they carry.

Abilities

Although they typically choose to focus on very different areas of expertise than their Garou allies, Corax nonetheless choose from the same Abilities offered in **Laws of the Wild**; they may also take the new Ability *Flight*. Additionally, as part of the deal Raven gives them, all Corax receive a free level of Dodge, Enigmas and Subterfuge.



Flight

Sure, all Corax can fly, but it takes more than a pair of wings to really know how to maneuver in the air, and homid Corax who don't develop some measure of this Ability are laughed at by their fellow ravens until they do. This Ability represents a knack for serious aerial agility and allows a Corax to do all manner of tricks that cannot normally be attempted by less-talented ravens: squeezing through small spaces, landing on precarious surfaces, dive-bombing a target, performing barrel rolls or picking up something without landing are just a few of the more common feats that can be attempted with this Ability. Most uses of this Ability require a Physical Challenge of some kind, with a difficulty based on conditions surrounding the feat — harsh weather, objects being carried, etc. Corax may also use *Flight* for all retests involving aerial combat or dodging incoming attacks while flying — “fomor flak” is no joke! This Ability does not confer any talent for piloting planes, helicopters or any other type of aircraft — it covers a Corax's natural flight abilities, no more. Those ravens who wish to learn how to operate metal birds (as if!) need to invest in other Abilities to do so.

As stated above, corvid Corax begin with two free levels of this Ability. Homid Corax, on the other hand, cannot select this Ability during the normal phase of character creation; they may only take it with the points gained from Flaws or Negative Traits.

Linguistics

this isn't actually any different from the normal *Linguistics* Ability, but since the Corax put so much stock in words (and deciphering efforts too), it merits a bit of additional coverage. If the Narrator allows, the Corax may take a level of *Linguistics* as *Basic Codes*, demonstrating a grasp of Morse code and a number of other code schemes; while more complicated codes are the province of the *Enigmas* Ability, this allows the raven to communicate with others quickly and with fairly reliable secrecy simply by speaking in a basic cipher of some kind. Also, many Corax take *Lip Reading* as a *Linguistics* specialization, considering how many of their recon efforts involve spying on subjects well beyond hearing range. A Corax still cannot make out words in languages she doesn't understand, of course, but smart ravens remember that body language is pretty universal—the Corax may not know what Cantonese for “Get the hell out of here!” is, but the gestures that accompany the statement are pretty telling.

Backgrounds

Corax may take the standard Backgrounds offered in *Laws of the Wild*, except for the following forbidden ones: *Pure Breed* (Corax admire ability, not ancestry), and *Totem* (Raven adopts all of his children automatically). In addition, Corax may take the new Backgrounds *Secrets* and *Umbral Maps*.



Secrets

See the *Secrets* Background in the Bastet chapter, and replace all uses of the word "Bastet" with "Corax."

Umbral Maps

Nuwisha aren't the only ones who really know their way around the spirit world; Corax are a close second in the Umbral exploration category, and flight gives them the ability to explore a number of places that the other races can't easily reach. Combine these habits with the normal Corax talent for organizing and disseminating information, and the result is this Background. For each level of *Umbral Maps* that the Corax has, the character's knowledge of the Near Umbra increases; while "maps" to the other areas of the Umbra also exist, they are notoriously unreliable due to the fluid nature of reality in such areas. Provided the character has a valid "map" of the area, each level of this Background reduces by one the difficulty of all tests related to traveling through the spirit world, finding shelter there, even attempting to speak with the native spirits. It may also cut Umbral travel times, at the Narrator's discretion.

One Trait — One or two safe paths and a hidey-hole or two.

Two Traits — Multiple routes to frequent destinations.

Three Traits — Safe zones, routes practically anywhere, and where *not* to go.

Four Traits — Multiple safe places and other hideouts, an encyclopedic knowledge of Umbral pathways and an awareness of what lives where.

Five Traits — A near-perfect knowledge of the Near Umbra, where to go, and what to avoid.

It should be noted that this Background rarely represents actual physical maps, but rather the knowledge imparted by long lessons in Umbral byways and a certain intuitive grasp of Umbral travel. Certain other characters such as Nuwisha or Silent Strider Garou may purchase this Background, but only rarely and with explicit Storyteller permission. Corax never give up such secrets cheap — this is one of the race's most potent advantages!

Merits and Flaws

Corax are unique creatures to begin with, and these Traits allow the player to further customize the character she wishes to create; Flaws make the character's life more difficult, while Merits offer some advantage. Corax may choose many of the Merits and Flaws from **Laws of the Wild**, with a few exceptions: Corax may not take any Traits that relate to silver tolerance, shapechanging or the pack mentality (their close bond with Helios prevents taking similar Merits for gold resistance, before anyone asks). Corax also may not take any Traits from the Garou Ties category or Traits that recreate Garou tribal Advantages or Drawbacks. If in doubt, consult the Narrator and use common sense about which Traits can be purchased.

In addition, the following Merits and Flaws are unique to the Corax.



Quick Learner (2 Trait Aptitude Merit)

A Corax with this merit halves the time required to learn a new Gift or Ability, although the Experience Trait cost remains the same. Needless to say, this frees the raven to learn more stuff even faster, which is always a good thing to the Corax.

Double Draught (2 Trait Supernatural Merit)

Most Corax are only permitted to drink from one of a corpse's eyes, but characters with this Merit are able to drink from both, provided of course that both eyes are still present. This allows them to get the best and the worst aspects of a corpse's death and form a whole picture from them instead of relying on just one viewpoint or the other. Needless to say, such gifted Corax are in high demand.

Guardianship (2 Trait Supernatural Merit)

Corax with this Merit have been entrusted with the most valuable of all possessions in the world — guardianship of a spirit egg. Only the character knows where the egg is in the Umbra, and she is its sole defender, although she can quickly rouse assistance from her fellow Corax if she claims the egg is in danger. While she upholds her duties, she gains a permanent Trait of Glory Renown, but if the egg is stolen or damaged on her watch, she suffers the permanent loss of three Glory Traits. Very few young Corax are entrusted with this level of responsibility, so characters with this Merit should look on it as a great honor indeed.

Birdseye (4 Trait Awareness Merit)

Ravens with this knack always seem to be able to pick out the right target to follow in a crowd, allowing them to cut some of the guesswork from their investigations with a quick Mental Challenge (difficulty depending on the number of people observed and the familiarity the Corax has with who he's looking for). With a successful test, the Corax may ask the Narrator which character would be the most interesting to follow. (Note: For the purposes of this Gift, "interesting" translates to "most important to the ongoing plot.") This Gift may be used on a gathering of player characters as well, but the results are a bit less reliable — such individuals seem to have the strangest grasp of their own destinies and have a knack for being unpredictable.

Strong Claws (4 Trait Physical Merit)

All birds have claws that contract automatically when they sleep, allowing them to keep their perch overnight, but characters with this Merit can apply that kind of grip whenever they like, making it next to impossible to pry something from their fingers. Should the character decide she wishes to hang on to an item in this fashion, she receives a free retest on all challenges involving retaining possession of that object; this retest also applies to other situations involving a good grip, such as hanging onto a ledge for dear life. While painful, this grip does not allow the Corax to inflict additional damage with brawling attacks; the Corax may also be two Traits up on chokeholds or



other grappling techniques, but *only* with the Narrator's explicit permission — such a bonus is *not* a regular part of this Merit.

Diet of Worms (1 Trait Mental Flaw)

Human, raven, human, raven — it's so hard to keep the forms straight sometimes, and this Flaw represents a particularly embarrassing confusion: the switching of human and corvid appetites. Thus the Corax often has a hankering for some three-week-old possum while in human form, or a steak dinner in raven shape (which won't do much to keep them aloft). Whenever it comes to eating in a social situation, the Corax must win or tie a Simple Test or feel the need to satisfy an inappropriate hunger.

Birdlike Mannerisms (1 Trait Psychological Flaw)

Many Corax carry over one or two corvid traits into their human forms, but characters with those Flaw have it all: birdlike head movements, sudden stalking advances, standing on one leg, and (when no one is looking) the human equivalent of preening, etc. Obviously, this Flaw should be roleplayed as well as possible; in addition, while the vast majority of humans won't think anything really strange about the Corax (other than perhaps a need for some therapy), those few who are aware of the Changing Breeds will be quick to catch on to the character's true nature.

Losing the Sun (4 Trait Psychological Flaw)

Towering skyscrapers, lush jungles, a moon rise over the ocean — reality is so *boring*! Corax with this Flaw are sick of the mundane vistas of the mortal world and long to one day fly off into the mysteries of the Umbra for good. Every time such a Corax steps sideways, she must make a Willpower Challenge against six Traits or simply take off into the depths of the spirit world; even if she is successful, the constant lure of the Umbral landscape puts them one Trait down on all Mental Challenges due to the distraction it offers them. Note: Obviously, if the Storyteller doesn't want to sidetrack a good portion of the evening while the other players chase down the errant birdie (lest the Corax's player abruptly lose a favorite character for good), this Flaw should only be allowed if the Storyteller and the other players are ready to accommodate the possibility of pursuing the wayward Corax at some point down the line.

Vertigo (5 Trait Psychological Flaw)

Ravens may soar to great heights in the course of their duties, but for some reason this Corax has never quite learned to adapt to such altitudes and exposure to such situations triggers a dizzying, paralyzing fear response. Flying isn't any better — any time the Corax wishes to fly higher than her Homid-form height, she must make a Willpower Challenge or be forced to stick to a lower altitude. Finally, any time the character perches more than 10 feet off the ground, the same Willpower Test is required, or things begin getting unpleasant as the character swoons, sways, and possibly even falls.



Emu (7 Trait Supernatural Flaw)

A character with this Flaw has been robbed of the greatest gift of the Corax — she cannot fly. This can be due to all sorts of reasons — irreparable physical damage, a supernatural curse, anything — but whatever the reason is, she cannot and will not fly. Practically, she's pretty much confined to Homid form and an earthbound Crinos and will be the subject of pity at best, derision at worst from her fellow Corax. What's more, without the ability to fly, a number of Gifts and rites are beyond her ability to learn, and since most Corax signs are meant to be seen from the air, chances are she will miss a good number of important signals as well. Players should only take this Flaw if they're ready to play a *severely* challenged Corax character, but striving to make a mark as one of the ground-huggers can be the stuff of great heroes indeed.

Renown

Renown is more important to the Corax than most outsiders might figure — while it's true that the Corax put more weight on what you're doing now as opposed to what your past glories might have been, those same past glories *do* mean that the other Corax are taking notice of what you're up to now, and that translates into a wider audience to work with. A wider audience, in turn, means more birds to spread the word of your latest exploits and so on. Thus, many Corax pursue Renown with a startling abandon; their usual habit of swapping stories and secrets with each other becomes a forum for each individual Corax to gain Renown and recognize the efforts of others to do the same. Indeed, depending on the type of secrets unearthed and how they are acted upon, a Corax's Renown can mount very quickly as the word gets around. Thus does Gaia's wisdom prevail, ensuring that even as they gain Renown, the Corax also uphold their traditional role of unearthing and spreading secrets.

Renown is also occasionally bestowed upon Corax by other sources, usually the Garou. When given such an award (typically Glory Renown, knowing those wolves), most Corax simply shrug and thank them politely, since they themselves tend to value deeds much differently than the Garou. Still, Renown is Renown, and if it helps the Corax in question get into the good graces of such amiable homicidal maniacs as the Garou (not to mention give them an advantage in swiping their Gifts), then who is the raven to complain?

Wisdom

Although they certainly do award the other types of Renown, to most Corax there is really only one type of Renown worth pursuing: Wisdom. It's a little bit different from the Wisdom of the Garou or the coyotes, however — Corax rewards are based as much on what is learned as the method the character takes to attain it. Thus, Corax who routinely dig up dangerous



information and pass it along are accorded great Renown, while those who take the more prudent course and avoid sticking their beaks in such a mess are seldom considered for such rewards.

Three Rules of Wisdom

- Get it fast. (Old information is worthless.)
- Get it accurate. (Bad information is worse than useless.)
- Get out safely so you can tell someone. (If you get killed without passing the information along, who the hell cares what you found out?)

Honor

Corax award Honor on a very specific basis: for deeds that benefit the Breed as a whole or the race's Kinfolk. Most of the time, the latter is far more common, since the Corax hold their Kinfolk close to them, but acts of great selflessness can also earn a raven this type of recognition. Even acts committed on behalf of those other than the Corax and their Kinfolk can earn the raven some Renown; after all, true Honor knows no racial distinctions....

Laws of Honorable Corax

- If you're going to do it, do it all the way. (Trying to do something honorable and backing out halfway through is worse than not trying.)
- Get witnesses. (The worst thing in the world is having your attempts at honor misinterpreted by those who weren't there. Keep the story straight.)
- Don't do it unless you're sure. (Performing a selfless action and expecting a reward isn't selfless. Don't even try it unless you're doing what you're doing for the right reasons.)

Glory

Glory tends to come but rarely to the Corax; they simply aren't built for the kind of deeds that make up most Glorious fare. (That's what friendly Garou packs are for, after all.) Still, sometimes one's back is to the wall and there is no other option but to stand and fight, and Corax who survive such brushes with death are likely to be heaped with Renown for doing so. The key is *necessary* battles — Corax who simply wander about picking fights are considered crazy at best and downright idiotic at worst. This Renown is rewarded as much for knowing when to run as when to fight.

Fightin' Rules for Glorious Corax

- Only fight when you have to. (Get into too many scraps and the rest of the Breed will be eulogizing you. Corax aren't built to be infantry.)
- Fight to win. (If you lose, you're dead. No one will care that you fought "by the rules" at your funeral.)
- No second chances. (If you have a chance to finish an opponent, do it. Killing him immediately saves you from ever having him come back when you least expect it. Hopefully.)



Rank

Although they choose to honor different deeds in very different ways, in most respects Corax gain Renown and Rank exactly as Garou do, at least in terms of game mechanics (see **Laws of the Wild**). However, there are the following exceptions:

- Corax advancement is very informal; one simply finds a better perch reserved for her at the next Parliament. She also finds it easier for her to get other Corax to listen to what she has to say (not to mention that she finds herself trusted enough to learn secrets previously forbidden). Once decided upon, spirits and other messengers carry the word of the raven's ascension around the world, cementing her new Rank. However, no Rank advancement is possible until the next Parliament convenes, so most Corax do their best to keep up to date on such gatherings.

- Corax cannot renounce their Renown; there's no purpose to such a feat.

- Corax can lose Rank and Renown very easily — all it takes is for word to spread that the raven is a lazy scout, a bad informant, or even that he's simply passing on the gossip and secrets of others without adding anything himself. However, since this can take a while to circulate through the Corax information system, the character usually has more than enough time (not to mention warnings) to straighten himself out and make up for his misdeeds. Those Corax who do lose Renown usually do so through their own inaction if nothing else.

The Corax Ranks

Rank	Title	Renown Requirement
Zero*	Fledge*	None*
One	Oviculum	2 Wisdom
Two	Neocomix	6 Wisdom
Three	Ales	8 Wisdom, 2 Honor, 1 Glory
Four	Volucris	10 Wisdom, 3 Honor, 2 Glory
Five	Corvus	10 Wisdom, 5 Honor, 3 Glory
Six**	Legend**	???

*This only applies to Corax whose training has yet to begin.

**Only very rare Corax reach this Rank, and those that do enjoy not only a worldwide reputation among their kind, but more importantly still are greeted with attentive silence by all Corax present whenever they choose to speak (a rare benefit indeed!).



• There is one unforgivable sin among the Corax, and that is lying to a fellow raven, or worse still lying *about* another Corax. Simple misinformation is one thing — bad as it is, it does slip in from time to time, escaping even the most perceptive and diligent Corax — but when it comes to ravens who would deliberately taint the whole network for their own personal gain, well, that's something no Corax will tolerate. Those found guilty of such tampering are typically stripped of one or more Traits of *permanent* Renown, depending on the severity of their lies, and subjected whatever other punishment the collective wrath of their fellows deems fitting.

Gifts

Corax begin play with three Basic Gifts, all of which *must* be selected from the assortment below. While both breeds of Corax differ in their philosophies, which usually leads to them select different beginning Gifts, any combination may be selected by either breed. Many Corax pick up a Garou Gift or two here and there as they get older, especially if they choose to run with a pack, but outside of what secrets they learn from others the following Gifts are the only ones Corax may learn; learning the Gifts of any other group costs an additional experience point.

Basic

Carriion's Call — Grisly though it might be at times, dealing with the dead is the special province of the Corax, and this Gift always leads the user unerringly to the nearest corpse in the vicinity. Although this may seem to be a talent of dubious power at first, the ability to locate the recently (or not so recently) deceased can often solve many kinds of mysteries, or lead to greater ones. All that's needed is for the Corax to spend a Gnosis Trait and concentrate for a moment, and the way to the body becomes clear; this Gift functions up to one mile distant. Of course, Corax are bound by their ancient duty to help the spirit of the departed find some rest as well; while they need not answer the call immediately, failing to do so within 24 hours will incur Raven's ire, causing them to lose a permanent Trait of Honor Renown. Frequent users of this Gift must also beware — many Wyrn-creatures have no problem slaughtering innocent people to lure a persistent raven into a trap.

Enemy Ways — A Corax with this Gift is a fine-tuned danger detector, capable of determining the nature of nearby foes and how many there are. The Corax must make a Static Mental Challenge against seven Traits; success indicates if there is indeed danger within 10 steps of the Corax, and if so then she may spend a variable number of Mental Traits to learn more about it. For two Mental Traits, the Corax may learn how many enemies are within the Gift's range; for two more Mental Traits, the Corax may determine what type of creature each foe is (werewolf, human, vampire, etc.). In no instance does this Gift have a range beyond 10 steps. If player characters are subjected to this Gift, either the Corax or a Narrator must ask them out of character if they



intend to do put the Corax in danger (see below); they must answer honestly. This Gift also functions in regard to enemies on the other side of the Gauntlet, but the Corax may only learn their number, not their composition. Characters do not necessarily know when this Gift is used on them unless they have a means of detecting supernatural scrying, but they are not likely to be amused if it is somehow brought to their attention — it's not a great vote of confidence for a friend to assess you as possible threat!

Note: "Danger" is defined for this Gift as "someone or something which imminently threatens to harm the Corax." Thus a vampire plotting to bring about the eventual death of the Corax is not detectable by this Gift until he actively begins hunting her, but a building about to collapse, a rival who seeks to kill the Corax later that night, or a gang out gunning for feathers are all certainly detected. Note also that the Corax cannot use this Gift to determine what type of creature a being is *unless* they are considered a "danger" to the Corax; the Corax cannot simply walk around using this Gift as a random supernatural critter detector.

Morse — Corax are never out of touch with each other for very long, and this Gift ensures that a Corax can always pass on a message to her fellows. The Corax must simply spend a Gnosis Trait and tap out her message in Morse code on some hard surface, and the nearest Corax will hear it clearly, no matter how far away that might be. If the nearest Corax is a player character, the sender may seek her out and deliver the message in private (it cannot be overheard); if not, a Narrator should take on the role of nearest Corax and respond accordingly. Of course, if the nearest Corax doesn't know Morse code, this Gift may not be quite so useful, but that's the risk one takes with this Gift. Benevolent Narrators may allow a Static Mental Challenge against eight Traits for characters who don't understand Morse code to try to figure out the gist of messages more complex than a simple "S.O.S.!"

Omens and Signs — Most Corax are skilled at picking out the threads of the intangible in mundane events, but this Gift renders that talent second nature. The Corax must make a Static Mental Challenge against six Traits to activate this Gift, and due to the nature of omens, a Narrator should be present to deliver the prophecy. The signs received this way are often very vague and require the Corax to decipher them on her own; after all, Raven doesn't want his children to get complacent in their efforts to find the truth! Truly momentous events also might be felt a long way off, at the Narrator's discretion. Corax tend to use this Gift sparingly, as overuse tends to evoke false omens and doesn't do much to help the paranoid tendencies many ravens have either.

Open Seal — As the Ragabash Gift; see *Laws of the Wild*.

Raven's Gleaning — Entranced by shiny things as they are, many Corax develop a natural eye for what's worth picking up and what's not in a glance; this Gift is essentially a value detector, allowing the Corax to go straight to the most valuable object out of a group. Looking at an object (or objects),



spending a Mental Trait and making a Mental Challenge, the Corax may ask a Narrator whether the item is worth picking up (or which is the most valuable item in the lot). Once the Corax has the item in her possession, she may also make additional tests to inquire about its craftsmanship, composition, dollar value, etc. Note that the definition of “value” may vary in some instances and that Corax may not always see *why* something is considered valuable — “What’s so special about this dirty old box, anyway?” — all they know is what their gut is telling them. Clever Narrators can quickly capitalize on this Gift to work all kinds of plot hooks into the story, and avaricious Corax had best beware — some items are also more trouble than they’re worth!

Corax Gifts and Difficult Knowledge

Many Corax Gifts deal with prophecy and uncovering hidden lore, both of which can be problematic to unprepared Storytellers and Narrators. When dealing with future omens and visions, the Narrator should provide future information based on what they believe might occur later in the session or chronicle, but players should know that not all visions come to pass and that later events or unexpected decisions can drastically alter what might have seemed to be a safe prediction earlier. Having a good intuition is one thing, but absolute certainty just isn’t in the cards for anything.

As for hidden lore, make sure to balance the needs of the story with the nature of the Gift — if uncovering a particular piece of information would ruin a story, you are within your rights to deny the character. However, don’t shortchange the Corax on their traditional role by often denying them information; instead, if a piece of lore might ruin the story, give it to the Corax anyway but wrap it in layers of riddles and clues, decipherable but still a daunting enigma. If the players know you’re not doing this just to “screw them over,” and they are playing a Corax well, more than likely they’ll jump at a chance to unravel such an elaborate puzzle.

Razor Feathers — Corax have very few combat talents, but this Gift helps even the odds a bit in battle. The Corax must spend a Physical Trait and a Gnosis Trait to activate this Gift, but once it is activated, the feathers along the edge of the Corax’s wings take on the strength and sharpness of steel, making them useful tools and lethal weapons. Damage from the feathers is aggravated, and after any successful attacking Physical Challenge involving her wings, the Corax may immediately call for a Simple Test; on a win or a tie, she inflicts an additional, nonaggravated wound. This Gift lasts for as many turns as half the Corax’s Physical Traits (round down), but may be used as



many times per scene as the Corax is willing to pay the activation cost. This Gift may only be used in Rara Avis form.

Scent of the True Form — As the Philodox Gift; see *Laws of the Wild*.

Sky's Beneficence — What fun is flying if you can't occasionally nail somebody from above? With this Gift, the Corax may deliver all manner of payloads (including the stereotypical) from any altitude with unerring precision. This Gift requires nothing but a Physical Challenge — when trying to hit moving targets, this is conducted in a normal manner as any combat challenge; against immobile objects, the difficulty is *never* higher than six Traits. Unless the target is previously aware of the Corax's presence, however, the first attack made in this fashion counts as a surprise, coming as it does from such an unusual vector. Depending on what's dropped, damage may be inflicted as well — most objects will inflict only a level or two of bashing or lethal damage. (Remember, the Corax has to be able to take the object into the air with him to begin with, so things like grand pianos and the ever-popular anvil aren't very likely.) Obviously, the Corax must be fully airborne to use this Gift, so those in Homid form need not even bother. The Corax must also be able to see his target, although this Gift can be used in conjunction with other Gifts that increase the Corax's vision.

Sky's Shadow — Creeping paranoia is a specialty of the raven-folk, and with this Gift the Corax imparts some of this unease to her target, causing him to jump at shadows and possibly even make some mistakes he wouldn't normally make (fear does strange things to a person, after all). This Gift costs a Rage Trait to activate, and the Corax must defeat her target in a Mental Challenge as well. If successful, the target feels eyes watching him wherever he goes and is one Trait down on all Mental- and Willpower-related challenges due to the constant distraction; this behavior should be roleplayed as well. Those who actually have the *Paranoia* derangement suffer the penalties above, and their derangement is considered active for the next scene or hour (whichever is longer). This Gift lasts for one session and is not cumulative.

Swallow's Return — Essentially a form of autopilot, this Gift allows an injured or fatigued Corax to make his way home, even while healing or sleeping. This Gift costs a Gnosis Trait to activate, but barring direct, willful intervention of some kind, it will always safely and unfailingly bring the Corax back home. Note that the Corax doesn't travel any faster than normal while this Gift is in effect; most Corax choose to fly when activating this Gift, but they may also walk or even (shudder) drive if the situation requires. This Gift only brings the Corax home — no other destination is possible — and the definition of "home" may get the Corax into trouble from time to time.

Taking the Forgotten — As the Ragabash Gift; see *Laws of the Wild*.

Tongues — As the Homid Gift; see *Laws of the Wild*. (Yes, this replaces and supersedes the previous listing in *Laws of the Wyld West*; Corax of both time periods should learn this as a Basic Gift.)

Truth of Gaia — As the Philodox Gift; see *Laws of the Wild*.



Voice of the Mimic — With this Gift, the Corax may imitate any noise she's ever heard, from voices and accents to the sounds of shotguns and construction equipment. One Mental Trait must be spent to activate this Gift, but it remains in effect for the duration of the scene. Only one Trait needs to be spent, no matter how many different sounds the Corax wishes to imitate during the scene. These imitations sound exactly like the original and cannot be distinguished as "false" by *Heightened Senses* or other supernatural means. A *Subterfuge* or *Performance* Social Challenge might be called for in the case of truly outlandish impressions, or against a particularly suspicious audience, but only to convince listeners of its veracity — the sound is still perfect, the challenge is just to see if the Corax is noticed as the source or otherwise gives the ruse away.

Word Beyond — The Corax may employ this Gift to use available materials to make a marker in the Umbra decipherable only by other Corax. The Corax must spend a Mental Trait to use this Gift, but may then either leave a secret message for any other Corax who pass by the area. The player may write it down and put it in an envelope marked for Corax only, leave it with a Narrator, or otherwise encode it, but no one other than a Corax may decipher the message. Of course, the marker may be destroyed, but only at the Narrator's discretion — most Corax markings are designed to be noticeable only from the air (of course), or are otherwise quite inconspicuous. After all, what's the point of a secret message if everyone else knows where it is?

Intermediate

Airt Sense — As the spirit Charm of the same name, except the Corax must spend one Gnosis Trait and make a Static Mental Challenge against seven Traits to use it. If successful, the knowledge of the Umbra granted by this Gift halves all travel times in the Umbra and may well reveal other local travel secrets at the Spirit Keeper's discretion.

Dark Truths — As the Uktena Gift *Secrets*, except the difficulty of the Static Mental Challenge is only seven for the Corax. See **Laws of the Wild**. (Hey, where do you think those Garou learned that neat little trick?)

Dead Talk — Corax have long trucked with the dead, learning their secrets and preserving their stories as part of Gaia's plan. This Gift allows the Corax to have a conversation with a body no more than a day dead; the Corax must spend a Gnosis Trait and make a Static Mental Challenge against six Traits. If successful, the Corax may ask the corpse questions for about 10 minutes before the Gift fades. The corpse answers honestly (although those who die unpleasantly may well answer in curt phrases). Note that most of the time it is the body itself answering the questions, for chances are the corpse's ghost is long gone. (If the wraith does happen to be nearby, it may converse freely with the Corax for the duration of the Gift but is under no compunction to answer questions honestly or even at all.)



Eyes of the Eagle — Corax have good eyesight as it is, but this Gift makes their vision superhumanly clear and accurate. This Gift requires that a Gnosis Trait and a Mental Trait be spent, but remains in effect for the remainder of the scene. The Corax is two Traits up on and automatically wins all ties on any challenges involving vision, has eyesight roughly twice as good as an eagle for the purposes of range and clarity, and most of all becomes able to see through visual obstructions such as darkness or fog as if it were high noon. Nothing short of a solid object blocks the Corax's vision. This Gift can be used in conjunction with Gifts that require line of sight, making it a potent Gift indeed.

Flight of the Swift — Normally, Corax don't have a problem with their flight speed; when fomori come calling in combat helicopters, however, it becomes necessary to summon an extra burst of velocity. By spending a Rage Trait, the raven may double her flight speed for a number of turns equal to her permanent Gnosis rating. This Gift can be used more than once per scene, and each such usage is cumulative. Thus, most ravens typically fly at up to 35 mph or so, so using this Gift once jumps that to 70 mph, twice to 140 mph and so on. Corax using this Gift are shielded from the natural hazards of excessive speed — no worries about breathing, losing feathers or hitting bugs at Mach 4 — but may need to make a test with the *Flight* Ability to retain control at any speeds higher than 70 mph or so, especially if in tight quarters or attempting maneuvers of any kind. Obviously, this Gift works only for airborne Corax.

Gauntlet Runner — This Gift allows the Corax to lower the level of the local Gauntlet, allowing her and others to step sideways more easily but also potentially allowing nasty things on the other side to cross over, so it is used sparingly. The Corax must make an Extended Static Mental Challenge against eight Traits; each win or tie lowers the local Gauntlet level by one. This Gift affects roughly a 20-foot area, but no matter how successfully it is used, the Corax must still use a reflective surface to step sideways. The Spirit Keeper should be notified when this Gift is used.

Helios' Child — By making a request of Helios and spending two Gnosis Traits, the Corax may conjure up a little piece of the sun itself to aid her. This Gift creates a ball of lambent flame in the Corax's hand, which doesn't burn the Corax herself but will ignite anything it touches; those struck with this flame suffer an aggravated level of damage, and those lit on fire must spend an action and win or tie a Simple Test to extinguish the flames. Additionally, the light of this Gift counts as true sunlight and can injure nearby vampires accordingly; all Kindred within two steps suffer damage as if confronted by direct sunlight. This Gift lasts for one scene or until the Corax dismisses it.

Hummingbird Dart — Another Gift to balance the odds in battle, this Gift allows the Corax to pluck one of her own feathers and toss it like a dart, essentially assuring her a supply of ranged weapons even if she's apparently unarmed. The Corax must spend a Rage Trait and win or tie a Simple Test for each dart she wishes to create, but once created the dart flies straight and true,



in defiance of physics and aerodynamics. The dart inflicts a single nonaggravated wound unless used in conjunction with *Razor Feathers*, in which case the dart's damage becomes aggravated.

Larder of the Shrike — Shrikes are masters of storing food for later consumption, and eventually the ravens gleaned the power of this Gift from them. By spending a Gnosis Trait, the Corax may preserve food — and anything else, like, say, a corpse — nearly indefinitely, so long as the target is allowed to hang in the Corax's "larder." (Talk about your skeletons in the closet!) As long as the Gift lasts, no natural decay will visit the target, though external factors may still come into play. Living beings cannot be placed into suspended animation with this Gift, nor are undead and Risen targets affected by it.

Mynah's Touch — With this incredibly versatile Gift, the Corax may tap into her keen perceptions and knowledge of spirit lore to recreate the effects of any Basic Garou Gift, provided that she herself has directly witnessed a *successful* use of the Gift in question. Not Gifts she heard about somewhere, not one's she's been in the area of before, not ones she saw tried but fizzled — only successful ones that she has *directly witnessed*. This Gift costs two Gnosis Traits and a Mental Trait to activate, and of course Corax must still pay the normal Trait costs and perform the standard challenges required by the Gift itself as well. Otherwise, the Gift functions exactly as it would normally. For purposes of clarity and game balance, the Narrator may require that the Corax keep an approved list of all such witnessed Gifts on her character sheet; he is also within his rights to ask her to provide a witness or two (out of character) to verify such "sightings" before allowing her to add a new Gift to this list.

Sun's Guard — Hanging out with Helios as often as they do, many ravens develop a resistance to extreme heat; no one wants to repeat that whole Icarus fiasco, after all. By spending two Rage Traits, the Corax becomes immune to all flames up to and including those on the surface of the sun for the remainder of the scene. Even balefire and other magical fires fail to harm or trouble her in the slightest, although any items not dedicated with the appropriate rites may very well be incinerated even if the Corax is untouched.

Vulture's Feast — Ravens are carrion eaters by nature, but some prefer not to wait and instead give nature a nudge in the right direction; with this brutal Gift, the Corax may cause her target's flesh to rot away in but a few moments. Obviously, this Gift causes permanent and horrific damage to normal creatures, and even those with supernatural healing capabilities may suffer from its cosmetic effects for quite a long time after the actual injuries have healed. To use *Vulture's Feast*, the Corax must spend a Willpower Trait and two Gnosis Traits, then touch her target and make a Physical Challenge; if successful, she inflicts two levels of aggravated damage as the flesh she touches withers and rots. For each successful use of this Gift, the target also gains the Negative Trait *Decrepit* (if a limb or body was attacked) or *Repugnant*



(if the face was struck); these Negative Traits must be bought off normally and cannot be bought off at all until the damage from the attack has been healed. Other Corax take special note of those ravens who seem to use this Gift a great deal, as that is often a sign of Wyrms corruption, so those who use it overzealously may face a stern inquiry from their fellows before long.

Advanced

Gift of Eyes — Normally, the visions they gain from the eyes of the dead are the burden of the Corax alone; with this Gift, however, the raven may pass on any such memories in raw, undiluted and undistorted form. To use this Gift, the Corax must touch her target (a Physical Challenge if the target resists), spend two Gnosis Traits and defeat her target in a Willpower Challenge; if successful, the target is bombarded by a memory of the Corax's choice, which must have been gained through the drinking of an eye. Unprepared targets may be overwhelmed and terror-stricken, while those braced for the gory experience may be able to learn clues or find details in the glimpse of the corpse's last few moments. Either way, those affected are at a two-Trait penalty on all actions for the next combat turn due to the intensity of the experience.

Moments of Eclipse — Although Helios hates to impart this Gift to his new charges, it is occasionally necessary to do so; by spending two Gnosis Traits, the Corax may temporarily sever his relationship with the sun. This renders him immune to the pernicious effects of gold for the duration of the Gift but also robs the raven of the sun's energy, preventing him from using Rage during the Gift's duration as well. This Gift lasts for up to 10 minutes for every permanent Willpower Trait the Corax possesses, although the Corax may cancel it sooner if he wishes. At the Narrator's discretion, those Gifts and rites related to Helios may become more expensive or even impossible to activate while this Gift is in effect, as the full extent of the severing is felt.

Portents — This Gift allows a Corax to sneak a peek at the important events of the near future, in a much broader way than previous Gifts. The Corax must spend two Gnosis Traits and remain undisturbed for at least 10 minutes; she may just want a general omen, or she may name an area of interest (say, the future of a particular neighborhood or the local Pentex CEO) and hope that Raven provides. The visions provided are vivid and accurate as prophecy can get, which is not to say that they aren't sometimes wrapped in riddles or symbolism — the meaning is still clear and accurate enough, if you can puzzle it out. The riddles are a small price (by Corax standards) for the view of the future this Gift offers. Obviously, the Storyteller should be contacted when this Gift is used to ensure that the prophecy is as true and accurate as possible.

Theft of Stars — Raven brought the sun, moon and the stars, and what Raven brought, Raven can take back. This bizarre but effective Gift allows the Corax to steal the light of these celestial bodies from her target, making him



unable to see any light derived from a natural source. Hence the target is as blind at high noon as he is under a full moon and gains the disadvantages of the *Blind Flaw* for the duration of the Gift (as long as he remains in natural light only). Of course, artificial light sources such as candles or lamps allow him to see, but even then the fear and disorientation of such a strange point of view remains. Few people realize how much natural lighting is used until it is taken away — not to mention that someone nervously wandering around his yard with a flashlight in the middle of the afternoon is bound to attract less than favorable comments from his neighbors. This Gift lasts for one hour and requires that the Corax spend a *Rage Trait* and a *Willpower Trait* in addition to besting her target in a *Willpower Challenge*. As many games are played mostly or entirely indoors, the Storyteller may wish to modify this Gift a bit to retain its playability — for example, she might extend it to all electrical lights as well as Raven vents his displeasure on people's reliance on creature comforts, etc.

Thieving Talons of the Magpie — A Corax with this Gift can steal the powers of other supernatural creatures and use them herself; this is not a great way to win friends but often acts as a prelude to a masterful deception — or a devastating attack. Anything from Garou Gifts to vampiric Disciplines to fae Arts can be taken. The Corax must first specify the power to be stolen (use game terms for clarity, if necessary; it is unlikely that the raven knows that vampiric speed is known as the *Celerity* Discipline, but in character she certainly knows what she means). Then she must win a *Mental Challenge* against her target. If successful, she gains full command of that power for each turn she spends a *Gnosis Trait*. The Corax instantly understands how to use the power, but must still spend all Traits and make all required tests to use it; if the power requires an expenditure of Blood, Pathos, Glamour or the like, substitute *Gnosis Traits* instead. This working knowledge fades immediately when this Gift ends, and the Corax does not gain any of the target's memories associated with the power, only a brief knowledge of how it works. Obviously, the original owner cannot use the stolen power at all for the duration of the Gift, though any other supernatural powers they have may certainly be employed (and most likely will be, with a vengeance).

Rites

Like the Nuwisha, the Corax use many Garou rites, and even claim to have taught the Garou a few (especially the *Rite of Talisman Dedication*); in any event, most Corax rites are designed to accommodate the solitary life of the raven-folk and for protecting the precious knowledge that they uncover in their travels. Unlike Nuwisha, Corax have no special list of rites to choose from, as their years of traveling alongside Garou and spying on their ways have taught them any rite a Garou could teach and then some. However, Corax are very cautious about showing off their knowledge, as they know the Garou are very suspicious of those they think have stolen their secrets. The Corax are



in no hurry to start a second War of Rage over something as silly as a few purloined campfire rituals.

The rites unique to the Corax are as follows:

Basic

Rite of the Sun's Bright Ray (Mystical) — This rite, which takes five minutes of chanting to perform, brings light to a darkened area, even underground. This light is considered to be true sunlight for all intents and purposes, and lights an area roughly twenty feet on all sides from the point it is invoked (in case of debate, consult a Narrator and use common sense). This light lasts for one scene, although the rite may be renewed with another five-minute ritual if a longer duration is required. Once created, this light cannot be extinguished by the Corax — the rite must run its full course, so Corax are careful to use this rite only when bright light will not give them away. This light causes damage to vampires as per actual sunlight, which makes this rite a deadly surprise indeed; however, players who attempt to crisp a convention's worth of Kindred by using this rite in the game's only play area risk the wrath of enraged Storytellers as well as fellow players, so care should be taken to ensure that this rite is not overused. (After all, Helios is a busy Incarna, and those who are constantly tugging on his sleeves for aid instead of doing things themselves will quickly find themselves rebuffed.)

Rite of the Fetish Egg (Mystical) — This is one of the most sacred rites of the Corax and is never undertaken lightly, as it not only produces a new Corax if successful but also requires great care and sacrifice on the part of the ritemaster. It must be performed in the Umbra, must be attended by another Corax of the opposite breed and requires four hours to complete; three hours are taken to create the egg itself, and another hour is needed to bind the new Corax spirit to it. The Corax must succeed at a Static Gnosis Challenge against four Traits before the rite begins, and three permanent Gnosis Traits must be expended during this ritual; if the rite is interrupted at any point, it automatically fails and the three Gnosis Traits are lost.

Even if the rite is successfully completed, the hard part is just beginning. Corax eggs are prized as treats by many unsavory types, and while the parent Corax automatically senses if the egg is in danger, most eggs are carefully hidden and guarded to avoid the need to defend them in the first place. Furthermore, the cry of a new Corax as it breaks the egg (which coincides with the fledgling's First Change in the physical world) can be heard for miles by Corax and creatures in the spirit world. If someone with feathers doesn't arrive to help the kid through the change and guard the egg, it is usually snacked on by all sorts of unpleasant things.

Still, this rite is the *only* way new Corax come about, so brave and elder Corax still attempt it despite the great costs and risks. The rarity of it only increases the need for Corax to be self-sufficient, after all, and helps bond Corax to each other with a tight sense of purpose and family.



Advanced

Rite of Battle Blessing (Mystical) — This rite, which is only permitted to be known by the three Morrigan at any time, allows the Corax to tip the tide of battle in favor of one side or another. All three Morrigan must be present for this rite to be used, which means it will seldom be seen in most games (much less learned by all but the most exceptional players), but when it is used, its effects are devastating. Each Morrigan may spend Gnosis Traits up to the limit of her *Occult Ability*, and for each Gnosis Trait spent by the Morrigan, victims of this rite are considered one Trait down on all challenges while they remain on battlefield. Targets cannot be down more Traits than it would take to reduce them to zero. This rite should not be allowed to become a regular factor in a game, as it remains one of the most potent advantages Raven has given his children. He does not like to see it used often or unwisely, as such usage robs it of its power and mystique.

Rite of Memory Theft (Punishment) — This rite is the most serious punishment Corax can levy on each other and is bestowed on those found guilty of dangerous stupidity or spilling valuable secrets. Three Corax are required to perform this rite, including the ritemaster, and they must surround the target (who is usually restrained or subdued by this point) while bearing a vessel painted with pictures of the target's deeds. The vessel is opened as the target's deeds are recited, with the memory of each event vanishing into the box as it is named, until the target remembers absolutely nothing that occurred after her First Change (including the rite and those who participated in it). This memory theft is an all-or-nothing process; memories cannot be selectively deleted. The ritemaster then crushes the vessel, gaining all the target's memories as if they were her own. This is seldom a pleasant process — after all, the Corax must have committed some great trespass to be chosen for this rite, and having such intimate knowledge of that dark deed often weighs heavily on the ritemaster's heart.

At the Narrator's discretion, the ritemaster may gain, or the target may lose, Abilities as a result of this rite, and if so the exact number of levels gained or lost are also up to the Narrator. Obviously, a Narrator should be present from the beginning of this rite since it has a severe impact on both the target and the ritemaster. The Narrator might also facilitate the relating of the target's memories to their new owner.

Only the wisest and eldest Corax are ever taught this rite, and it is kept a closely guarded secret from younger Corax and other Changing Breeds alike. There is no game system for this rite, other than what may be necessary to subdue the target, but would-be memory raiders beware — the same restriction that applies to Garou rites also applies to Corax rites. That is, if the rite is knowingly undertaken against an innocent Corax, those performing the rite lose *their* memories instead. If the rite is performed unknowingly on an innocent Corax, the target still loses her memory, but if her innocence can be satisfactorily proven to the ritemaster, the rite may be reversed by performing



the whole ritual in reverse. There is no known method for returning the memories of a Corax who was rightfully found guilty and subjected to this rite.

Toys

Corax are not nearly as dependent on tools as many of their changing cousins; after all, when you have to be ready to take flight at any give time, it doesn't do to carry a lot of miscellaneous equipment around with you. Still, in the course of their investigations, many Corax come across a few little magical toys.

Most Corax like having a trick or two held in reserve, especially ones that balance out some of their traditional disadvantages. That being said, there's a fairly brisk trade in fetishes and other magical items among the Corax, and any raven who digs up a potent item can usually make off with a treasure load of important secrets in return — assuming she's willing to trade it in the first place, of course.

Sliver of Helios

Fetish Trait Cost: 1 **Gnosis:** 3 **Spirit Affinity:** Helios (duh)

This handy little fetish is nothing less than a dagger-shaped slice of sunlight itself; when activated, it fills a 10 foot by 10 foot square with true sunlight. All vampires within that radius suffer normal damage from such exposure. If the owner attempts to wield the sliver like a dagger, it shatters and the light goes out immediately. Additionally, the light from the sliver cannot be dimmed in any way.

Silver Claws

Fetish Trait Cost: 1 **Gnosis:** 5 **Spirit Affinity:** War, Ancestor

These very dangerous fetishes are typically only carried when combat with another changer seems unavoidable. They fasten over the wielder's normal combat form claws. A drop of the Corax's blood and the usual Gnosis Test activates the fetish, which then transforms from stainless steel (its usual state) into pure silver, with the usual advantages this offers against some werecreatures. Of course, this fetish tends to make any such allies the Corax has uncomfortable in the extreme, so prudent ravens refrain from bringing them out until they are truly necessary. Rumors hold that gold variations of this fetish exist, but no honorable Corax has ever seen such a thing.

Corvid's Favor

Fetish Trait Cost: 1 **Gnosis:** 2 **Spirit Affinity:** Raven, Ancestor

This simple but handy fetish is a simple feather wrapped with the wearer's hair. When activated, it allows the Corax to use Corvid-form-only Gifts while in Homid form. While the Corax still cannot fly in this form, it does make some tricks a little easier to perform.

Raven's Face

Fetish Trait Cost: 3 **Gnosis:** 3 **Spirit Affinity:** Raven, Helios,
Wisdom



This rare fetish is nothing less than a massive wooden totem pole that acts as a Gnosis battery for Corax fortunate enough to have access to it. Typically found only in the Pacific Northwest, these fetishes can hold any amount of Gnosis Traits — to transfer Gnosis Traits into the pole, the Corax need only perch on top of it and make the usual activation test. Withdrawing stored Gnosis requires the same process in reverse. Other Changing Breeds cannot access the Gnosis stored in these fetishes — wolves and cats and sharks don't do the whole perching routine very well, and would look enormously silly even attempting it.

Counterfeit

Fetish Trait Cost: 2 **Gnosis:** 3 **Spirit Affinity:** Coyote, Illusion, Raven

A handy prop for those Corax who simply cannot control their natural urges to make off with the objects of others, this fetish takes on the shape of any small item that it is touching upon proper activation and the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait. Only the item's appearance is assumed — a counterfeit gun won't fire, for example, nor will a duplicated cell phone dial or receive messages. When the owner attempts to use the item, it reverts to its original appearance — a small clay tablet with the Raven's sigil on it. Clever Corax might even be able to get the Counterfeit back if they watch its new owner closely — more than one duped person has thrown the fetish away in disgust at being tricked. Provided it survives such treatment, it can be used once more.

Helios' Mirror

Fetish Trait Cost: 5 **Gnosis:** 4 **Spirit Affinity:** Helios (see above)

Precious few of these fetishes exist, and those that do are closely guarded by their owners; with the typical size of a mirror being over a foot tall, they aren't portable either and thus usually fixed in a Corax's home or secure Umbral hideout. Upon activating the mirror, the Corax may observe anyone who's currently on the sunlit side of the world, and he may continue to scry on them for as long as he likes or until they are overtaken by night. The mirror can be used at any hour of the day or night, but cannot observe anyone on the night side of the planet or in the Umbra. This fetish can only be used once per day, and abuse or overuse tends to shatter these fragile fetishes. Most targets will have no idea they're being spied on, but those with supernatural senses such as *Auspex* or *Heightened Senses* may make a Mental Challenge; success means they get an itchy feeling between their shoulder blades (or the equivalent).





Bastet

The Eyes of Seline

In the flickering shadows of the firelight, Lord Magbane, a tall Bagheera warrior whose hide bears the scars of countless battles, rises to address the taghairm.

Before there was anything, there was Ahu, she who came before and she who will remain after the universe is gone. Lonely in the depths of her endless night, Ahu created three children to keep her company: beautiful, mad Nala, whose dreams make up the essence of everything; regal, disciplined Rahjah, who soothes Nala's dreams and gives them purpose; and last of all proud Cahlash, who unravels the dreams of his sister so that new things may take their place. You may one day hear others call them by the names Wyld, Weaver and Wyrn, but that is because they do not know them as we do. We Bastet know that they are not impersonal forces who shape creation by accident, but beings as are we ourselves — they are neither wholly good nor wholly evil, but simply *are*. How can anyone look at the wonders of the world (or the horrors that plague it) and not see the touch of guiding hands in their infinite intricacy? As capricious or unyielding as they may be at times, we alone among all the Changing Breeds remember their true forms and honor them, which is why we have earned their special favor and earn many secrets from them. Arrogant, you say? Perhaps. But I'd rather be an arrogant cat with a goddess on his side than a humbler soul with no patron to watch over him.



Under the watchful eyes of Ahu, the three siblings came together as Nyota Jamaa, the Star Family, also known as the First Pride. During their adventures they brought the universe itself into being: Nala's tears became the *chaya*, the many spirits that inhabit the universe and whisper secrets to Ahu; her beloved kittens formed the stars and planets. The alternating touches of her brothers created vast oceans, majestic peaks and other natural features. For a time, all was well with this new universe, but soon trouble began between Nala and her brothers as they argued amongst themselves over whose creations were the greatest. As mother to everything, Nala thought herself the ultimate maker, and when her brothers derided her role, she retreated into Ahu's sheltering embrace for a long time, where she wept bitterly for her loss of innocence, for even as she wept for her own loss she knew that meant the universe's age of peace had passed as well. Does that seem sad to you? It does for many kits as they face the troubles and struggles of their lives, especially in the wake of the Change, but as with all things, Nala's suffering did not go entirely without a blessing as well.

Gaia, sweetest and most beautiful of Nala's children, saw her mother flee and followed after, seeking to comfort her. When at last she came and embraced her mother, Nala was filled with pride over the grace of her eldest daughter and bestowed upon her the ultimate gift: While she could not bring an end to her own sadness, she willed it so that wherever her tears touched Gaia, life began to bloom. Soon beautiful Gaia was a gem beyond compare, glowing with all manner of life, and at that sight her two fathers became jealous and put their gifts to work even harder than before, shaping and destroying the life they encountered in hopes of outdoing each other once and for all. Many great beasts were lost to oblivion during this time, and Gaia cried out in agony as her fathers altered the paths of life itself. Her cries drew Nala out of her sorrow and filled her with rage instead, so that she struck both Cahlash and Rahjah away from her daughter before they could ruin every blessing Nala had granted. The last thing changed during this great clash of forces was perhaps the most puzzling blend of all: humans. That is why humans have always been a mystery, even to us, for they carry with them pieces of all three of the Star Family, rather than just one or two like most beings do. To be sure, some of them have a bigger piece of one than others do, but the sparks are still there, no matter how well hidden.

This is not to say the wars of the brothers ended, however — oh no, quite the contrary. Although Nala's anger shamed them all into a momentary truce, the three do not trust each other as they once did, even today. Rahjah and Cahlash are forever circling Gaia and her children, sneaking their claws in and trying to shape those they touch into their own image. Remember that, kits, next time you begin to wonder how a little progress or a little entropy could be such a bad thing — Nala's brothers are always watching, quick to take any chance they get, and seldom is that a good thing for anyone else. Even too much of Nala's embrace is unhealthy for our kind, tainted as we are by the conveniences of modern life and the tiny "wild places" where we can still roam



— like it or not, most of us are far too sedate to withstand the sheer insanity of Nala's touch. More than a few wise seers have fallen to incurable madness after spending too many hours communing with the All-Mother. So remember, kits, that while we venerate the three siblings and whisper our secrets to them, we must always do our best to keep our distance as well, for they are beings so great that our very minds and souls fracture if we try to understand their ways; even the smallest of their schemes can have devastating repercussions.

That is exactly how the first Asura, or wicked spirits, came about — Cahlash wanted to add just a little bit of chaos and disorder to the works of his fastidious brother, and in his anger and spite he called into being a great wave of wicked chaya to carry out this bidding. All he asked was that they insinuate themselves into things that were not pure and noble, that they might break them down so other things could be called into being (not to mention get back at his meticulous sibling). But as it seeped over and into so many things, the evil chaya became more and more concerned with destroying things and consigning them to oblivion rather than replacing them with something else. Soon the spirits were thinking for themselves, and the entity the Garou call the Wyrms was born. This is an important distinction to make, little ones, because it is one of the fastest ways we can land ourselves in serious trouble with our furry friends — we Bastet still venerate Cahlash, though only the most depraved of us would dare worship the Wyrms. Cahlash represents the need for the old to break down so that the new can come up, while the Wyrms is simply annihilation, an empty pit from the depths of which nothing ever returns.

So while you must stand against the Asura with all your heart, mind and soul, never forget that Cahlash is as necessary to the universe as his siblings are. If his children dishonor him with their wicked ways, then it is only proper that we put them in their place, that balance might be restored. I can see that this is new to you and will probably take some time to sink in, so I will move on to something else: How our kind, the Bastet, first came to be.

The Rise of the Khara

At the dawn of the world, one of the greatest Asura was a many-headed dragon, whose rampages drove the humans cowering into caves and sent the cat-folk scattering for their lives. The humans fought back with magic, for even then they were clever folk and had learned to harness the gifts of the Star Family, but without muscle to pierce the dragon's hide, the magics slid right off. Likewise, while the great saber-teeth could rend the dragon's flesh, they could not attack its spirit, and so their battles were doomed as well. Until, that is, the two greatest members of each race realized that their only hope lay in combining their efforts. Palar was a powerful sorcerer, whose arts commanded the spirits and the elements themselves; Akuma was a mighty hunter, whose teeth had brought down countless beasts. Together they threw themselves at the dragon, and all the world awaited the outcome. For a terrifying seven days



and nights, the two made war on their enemy — the skies seethed with strange magics and howling spirits while the earth shook from powerful blows. At last the dragon slumped to the ground, dead, and both races came to rejoice, freed from their oppression at last.

When they came to the battleground, however, they saw their champions bleeding in the dust, dying from the terrible wounds they had suffered. As their blood mixed upon the ground and the heartbroken wails of their kin reached the heavens, Seline the Moon Mother herself came down and took pity on them. She blessed their blood with magic and brought forth beings that combined the best of both races, blending the mysticism and invention of the humans with the cunning and ferocity of catkind. They were not the bridge between races that you might have expected, however — far from it! We Bastet have never been content among other races, even at our best moments, and reveling in their new power, the Khara — for so this new tribe of beings was known — hunted human and cat alike, driving a deep terror of the great cats into both races that lasts to this very day. Such was their dedication to the hunt, in fact, that eventually they displeased Seline with their overzealousness. To teach them humility, she levied the curse of fury and silver against them as she had against the wolf-changers, and scattered them across the globe.

Thus the many different breeds of catkind you find today, for while the saber-teeth died out eventually, their bloodlines mixed with the cats wherever they settled. Where they passed, new Bastet were born. We carry their heritage within us even now; if you doubt my words, feel the fury beneath your skin as you change forms, the primal ferocity that flows through your veins. That is the shadow of the Khara, and while we must still labor under the curse Seline placed on them, we can no sooner give up that energy than we could give up breathing.

Perhaps you have heard of the Impergium? The time when the Bastet and the other shapechangers kept the human herd under control? It is said that the Garou were the ones who committed the worst massacres of that time, and that may be true, but never let anyone tell you that catkind didn't do its share either. We have always shared a strange view of the Shining Child — humans — at once curious about their many secrets and enraged at their seemingly limitless well of stupidity and shortsightedness. In their wisdom, the elders of those early days decreed that while humans who courted the embrace of the Asura or dared to violate our sacred Den-Realms should be destroyed, the majority of humanity deserved our respect and protection. Blinded by the secrets humanity offered, they didn't see where the tools of the monkeys would take them, and I'm sure I'm not the first to wonder what they would say if they saw the world today... but that way lies foolishness. This is our world, and we must do what we can.



Wars of Rage and Conquest

Unfortunately, the decisions of our elders did not just affect the human world. When we Bastet announced our intentions to guide and protect the humans, and refused to share our secrets with other Killi — shapeshifters — the Garou became enraged. Already angry that the other Changing Breeds wouldn't recognize them as the rightful kings of Gaia's creatures, the Garou declared war on our Kin and us, demanding information and recognition. Hah! We Bastet have never been ones for kings; even the Simba and the Khan have given it their best shot, and look what they have to show for it! So we gave the wolves our answer, and the blood flowed like rivers across the lands. Sweet Gaia, the slaughter! War is a terrible thing, but nothing is more terrible than the kind of destruction that Gaia's children can bring upon each other when they are roused to anger. Although we are not blameless in this conflict, the wolves remain the greatest criminals: They killed our kittens as they slept, broke the bones of the great bears, chased their coyote cousins from the earth, drove the lizard kings into hibernation. They even butchered their own kind, such was their frenzy.

Worst of all, at some time during this war the Garou performed a great rite that severed our natural ties to the spirit world, cutting us off from our birthright. The wisest of our kind may still learn the secret of stepping sideways, but most of us must be content in this world, catching only the reflections of the spirit realm as it passes by. Damn the wolves for that! Indeed, as a whole, we fought more wisely than the Garou, but our numbers have always been less than theirs, and gradually the war shifted in their favor. We were finally able to sue for peace when the Garou themselves became divided, otherwise it's anyone's guess as to what might have happened.

Of course, even lessons written in blood are quickly forgotten by most races, and while the end of the fighting meant that we were free to keep to our own once more, to our shame we quickly began fighting among ourselves over matters of dominance and territory. Simba vs. Khan, Bubasti vs. Bagheera, the list goes on, but the result is the same — while the Eyes of Gaia were fighting in the wake of the War of Rage, the humans began spreading like wildfire, constantly pushing their horizons and inventing new devices to tame their surroundings. As the battles among our own kind increased in intensity, the humans took to emulating our example: they embarked on all manner of crusades and brutal conquests, forever trying to prove their superiority and correctness to anyone different from themselves. I've remarked before about how little humans seem to learn from generation to generation when it comes to the follies of their ancestors, but this time went above and beyond the anything before it. As the Madness spread, human witch-hunters sought out everything that smacked of heresy or the supernatural; many of our Folk and other night creatures were destroyed during this time, as well as countless innocent mortals. Some blame vampires or other forces for the Burning Times — yes, kits, vampires do exist, but we'll speak of those things later — but I've



seen enough of human nature to think that most if not all of it was their own doing. They set Europe ablaze with suspicion and paranoia, and exported this fear and hatred to distant lands with their colonization efforts. Facing the very real possibility of extinction at the hands of these madmen, the Folk as a whole came to a decision — to put aside petty disputes and focus on regaining the world we were supposed to protect.

Did it work, you ask? Well, it was far from a perfect concord — many of the other Folk refused to attend the peace councils at all, fearing another Garou ambush, and even those who came bore the bitter hatred engendered by a lifetime of warfare. Who can blame them? We came through both the Madness and the first War of Rage in tatters, a shadow of our former glory, and we were among the lucky ones. While some of the tribes have earned our respect and may live on our lands in peace, those snakes with fur they call the Silver Fangs and the Shadow Lords have earned our ire with their countless broken promises and poisoned accords. Suffice it to say that to this day we try to judge every changer as we come across them. We walked out of the councils ostensibly as neutral parties, although old grudges and guerrilla conflicts have continued ever since. As for the goals of the concord, well, the Madness was extinguished in time, although it's uncertain whether that was the result of our combined efforts, the manipulations of other Shadow Folk, or even just the flame of fanaticism dying out of its own accord. Living in constant fear takes its toll on the spirit, after all, and even the worst humans cannot bear the strain forever. While I am proud of my people and our legacy of service to Seline, I must admit that in light of the world's current state, it would seem that for all the good words spoken there, we ourselves are sometimes no better than the monkeys when it comes to putting aside our problems and getting our jobs done. Seline forgive us, hopefully we'll come to our senses soon.

The Modern Era

As if to prove the worst fears wrong, even as the Madness died out, the colonization efforts continued. We were too wounded and fractious to stop the humans as they crushed the Kin of the Bubasti, slaughtered the ancestors of the Balam and drove the Ceilican into the teeth of Cahlash. Carried across the sea by stout ships and potent magic, Garou came to the New World — known as the Pure Lands to the native changers — and brought the intolerance of their human Kin with them. Although the first War of Rage was more than 10,000 years past, many of the old hatreds had never quite healed, and the conflict quickly began anew, until an entire tribe of native Garou was destroyed and the Pumonca tribe stood near extinction themselves. Peace talks finally won out in the face of a great Asura menace known as the Storm Eater, but let me ask you this: If ancient grudges can withstand the passing of nearly a dozen millennia, do you really suppose the treaties signed in the days of the westward expansion put an end to the anger brought on by this second War of Rage? So if you ever hear anyone, dog or otherwise, waxing sentimental about the days “when the West was won,” remember my



words and cuff him upside the head. Even if there aren't any Pumonca around to appreciate what you've done, you'll have done a little to avenge their losses just the same.

About the Ajaba

It is not a matter to bring up before the others, kits, but there is another tribe that once called itself Bastet — the Ajaba, or hyena-folk. A mixture of wolves and cats born of the efforts of a mad sorceress, they nonetheless shared the plains with the Swara and the Simba for countless years, and once called us brothers and sisters. However, things went sour early on — they were jealous of our pure lineage and conspired to destroy the greatest of the Simba kings. When their plan was revealed, they were cast out of the Folk en masse, and thus began a feud between them and the Simba that has persisted into the modern era. It may have found its end in recent years, however, as the mighty Simba chief Black Tooth and his pride have single-handedly massacred nearly all the remaining Ajaba and their Kin, causing the others to scatter and flee for their very survival. It is said that they bear all Bastet a grudge over their treatment and hate the Simba with a rage that drives them to irrationality in its depths. I cannot condone the tactics of Black Tooth and his savage companions, but I must also admit that few Bastet have cried over the loss of the Ajaba. Too many of us lost relatives over the years to make their passing an occasion of more than the most token displays of grief.

If you should ever see one, be careful, for they set traps with great base cunning as their scavenger legacy might indicate, and they hunt in packs, too cowardly to face their foes alone. Should one show your his teeth, it is not a smile of friendship but a threat of violence. They are no longer Folk and cannot be trusted to uphold even the smallest of duties with any kind of honor.

Not that the Pure Lands were the only source of senseless violence. As the millennium turns and the world braces for another thousand years, great advances have been made, but the cost in blood is greater still. The turn of the last century found the Khan fighting terrible battles amongst themselves, warring with the colonial powers for the pride of their ancient sultanate — a conflict that ultimately tore the tribe apart and reduced them to the small handful of individuals that remain today. On the grasslands of Africa, the Simba have begun another senseless war for dominance, slaughtering all who oppose them and sending the Bagheera and the Swara into flight for their very lives. Meanwhile, the Amazon Wars burn across the rainforests, pitting all manner of night creatures against the monstrously corrupted corporate entity



known as Pentex, while the Balam fight to drive *all* these invaders from their lands once and for all. It's a grim time for the Folk, but one of great promise as well. If we can survive this darkest night of all, the dawn will be that much the sweeter for the blood that's been shed to bring it about.

An optimist, am I? Perhaps, but we have always been a fierce folk, and what's more, we are the guardians of secrets, some of them ancient beyond belief, some of them as fresh as this night's moonlight. In those secrets are countless keys to unlock doors that our enemies would rather keep closed, and though we have kept them well since first we were charged with them, I believe that now they must finally be brought to light. Though it may cost us our lives, the Unmaker's hand shall be turned away — so shall Seline's will be served!

Karoush: The Litany

This is the Code our Ancestors made.

This is the Law of the Moon and the Sun.

This is the Law of the Shaping of Secrets.

This is the Law of the Change.

— Traditional lorespeaker chant

There are those who say that we cats lie and know no honor, but they are fools. Just because we are aloof doesn't mean we are indifferent; indeed, kits, if anything you'll find that most of us live by very strict codes, even if they appear indecipherable to outsiders. Above all, however, is the Karoush, the code of laws that binds all Bastet from the mightiest Khan to the swiftest Swara and the craftiest Qualmi — learn these laws and uphold them as best you can. If you don't, we will hear about it, and there will be consequences. Believe me.

Honor Yourself

We hold magic within ourselves, within our hearts and minds and spirits. To dishonor ourselves is to disperse that magic and scatter our souls.

We are to remain clean — to cleanse ourselves of filth, divest ourselves of our former lives, care for our own health and avoid the inbreeding sickness. Possession is unclean, and we must shake other spirits from our skins, lest they taint our own.

When we fail — we must purify ourselves with washing, seek cures for our sickness, raise the deformed ones we bear and cleanse our souls with ceremony. If the Unmaker's spawn ride us to destruction, we are obligated to take our own lives. If we do not, others will do it for us.

Honor Your Word

We are the wisest of the Changing Breeds and come down from places that respect the meaning of honor. Let the dogs and the monkeys piss on trust; we are honest folk — with each other, at least. It's acceptable to lie to other creatures; they are not of our blood and not bound by our laws.



We are to remain truthful — to break no oaths before the Folk and make no false witness against one of our kind. A promise made is a bond sworn to Seline; we act on it as if the goddess Herself would punish us for failure. We will flee to survive a fight, but will not run when others depend on our strength.

When we fail — we must make restitution to those we deceive, in deeds or trade. We may be challenged to Hanshii or punished by rite. We may be exiled or branded. At the very least, we will be disgraced and remembered as liars to all of the Folk.

Honor Your Kin and Kind

We remember the Kinfolk who keep our kind alive, and we respect our cousins in the other tribes. The great cats are more precious than our human lovers — numbers demand as much — but both of them are blood relations. All Bastet are sacred in the light of the moon, and our sternest oaths protect us in these twilight times. All our laws pertain to Kin and Kind, and we respect each other as siblings under the moon.

We are to remain just — to quarrel not with each other without cause, to seek open restitution and honorable combat, to respect a challenge and the challenger, and to obey the lorespeaker and host of the taghairm. When our Kin and Kind are in danger, we will aid them; when they cry, we will succor them.

When we fail — we will take the judgment of our fellows, distance ourselves from our Kind, forsake the taghairm and accept the brand of the oathbreaker. If we allow our Kin to come to harm, we will accept that their spirits will carry news of our cowardice, and we accept the label as just.

Honor Your Earth

We are the children of the moon and the earth together, shaped by the fathers, sired by the mother and suckled by Gaia and Seline as one. When corruption eats at the heart of our world, when the Asura devour the spirit of the land, we will not stand by. Our weapons are many — secrets, claws, teeth and allies — and we will not hesitate to employ them for our world's survival. Our people have walked too close to extinction for us to take such matters lightly.

We are to remain fierce — to poison not the earth nor allow it to be ruined. We will inform others of plans to pollute the wild and hunt down poachers. We will stand beside the other Killi, even the hated dogs, if that means stopping the demons. We will not ally ourselves with shadow powers or drink corrupted wisdom. We will stand brave in the face of the Unmaker's wrath and we will triumph.

We do not fail our earth and mother. That path leads to death.

Honor Your Silence

We are keepers of secrets, and our fates depend on silence. Each of us bears the hidden doom of our own people, and we know the cost of betraying that trust. We also know that we have what others want — or what they *think*



they want — and it amuses us to make them squirm. Our knowledge is our concern. We will not share it unless we wish to.

We are to remain quiet — never to let our Yava leave our lips, nor allow them to fall into other hands. Our mysteries are our own to dispense, and we will value them by Rank and title. We will hide ourselves from outsiders; they will think they know us, but we will delude them. We will wrap our lore in riddles and tales; let the clever ones puzzle out their meaning. We will act as if we know even more than we do, for it keeps outsiders guessing. Let them wonder at our insight; they value us more highly when they do.


When we fail — we will cover our tracks with misdirection, pretend to be other than what we are, fill the air with idle rumors and hide messages in code. She who fails to keep the Yava will be killed — there is no better mercy — and he who acts upon it will be ripped apart by hunting cats. There is no forgiveness for this crime.

Bastet Culture

Now listen closely to the soothing words of Healing-Claws, elder shaman of the Swara tribe, as she speaks of Bastet society.

We cats are a solitary folk, yes? As you've noticed by now, we tend to keep to our own. That is the way Seline made us, after all, always ready to rely on our own skills for survival. How could we keep our secrets if we did everything in a group? Even before we learned what we truly are, though, many of our kind never really felt a close kinship to anything — if you were born of catkind, you were treated differently from birth, as your fellows smelled the strangeness on you; if you were born human, you didn't get along well with the group thinking and socialization of your fellow monkeys, forever wandering off alone to see what you might find there. Lonely? Sometimes. Even after we learn what we are, part of that knowledge is recognizing that we are solitary hunters, have always been and will always be. But there is strength in that knowledge too, for it is the role that has been given us, and there is no greater joy in life than serving the purpose one is destined for. Walking alone has its risks, but the rewards are well worth the chances taken. Who else can honestly say that they face the world as we do?

Naturally, though, your being here tells you another truth — that while we may be loners by destiny, part of us needs the sense of community that only a group of our own kind can provide. Even Kin, treasured as they might be, do not know the full joys of the worlds we travel in as well as other Bastet do. Gatherings such as this one allow us to trade secrets, recognize achievements, pass along spirit lore and organize our actions to better serve the Moon Mother. And so we meet from time to time, enjoy each other's company as long as we can and take our leave until the next time we feel the call for others like us. Do not be mistaken, kits — we Bastet have a society as rich in tales and traditions as any other in the world, supernatural or otherwise. It is simply something we do not share with outsiders, for they would not understand.



Come close, then, and I'll tell you of some of the traditions we fight to keep alive.

The First Year

Even for those raised by loving Kin, the Change is often an incredibly difficult time, especially given that most of our kind would sooner eat a spoiled carcass than turn to others for help with personal problems. Fortunately for us all, the size of our community allows us to keep a close eye on the kittens we have. When it seems that one of our own has begun the Change, another older cat arrives to comfort the young one and teach her our ways. This mentor, known as the kuasha, is responsible for teaching the young one — known as the Tekhmet — everything from whisker-speaking to the Gifts of the spirits and how to find a taghairm such as this one. Many times the First Year involves a great deal of travel, both to show the kit the world she must study as well as to help her break away from her old life once and for all. As the name indicates, this training usually lasts for a year, although that can vary by tribe as well, I'm told. After that time, teacher and student part ways as equals, and the cycle begins once more.

Of course, this is a tremendous responsibility, since not only is the mentor responsible for the actions of his kit during this time, but he's also literally holding the future of our race in his paws with every student he takes. A student who's taught well becomes a valuable asset to us all, a living example of the Bastet way imbued with youthful vitality; a student whose mentor is unprepared for the scope of the challenge he has accepted is often confused and suggestible, easy prey for dakat and other horrors lurking in the night. Seline willing, one day you yourselves will take on students — remember that doing so confers great honors upon the kuasha, but you will be watched closely by others of our kind the entire time, and should you fail in this sacred charge, the disgrace that follows is deep and hard to overcome. There are too few of us to lose even a few kits to a teacher's pride or foolishness.

Tahla

Ah, the essence of catkind! We are the keepers of secrets, and in order to keep them safe, we have learned to couch them in riddles and allegories. This keeps our race quick and flexible while ensuring that less-gifted beings cannot steal the lore we fight so hard to keep. We call this ritual secret-sharing the tahla, and it usually revolves around things like Gifts, Den-Realms, important secrets and even just good gossip we'd like to repeat but don't want to risk having someone else overhear. Don't ever expect to hear one of our kind say something like "The vampire prince is plotting to visit the church at midnight." Instead, you might be told "At 12 lashes of Chronos' whip/A ghostly spider will descend from its web/And crawl into the house of perpendicular wood." Do you see what I'm saying? Repeating the first is easy, takes no talent and can be stolen in a moment by those spying on the cat who told. The second one, however, can only be of use to those who are able to



puzzle out its references, which makes it that much more useful to us. Before you ask, that was one of the easier ones. They get harder as the importance of the secret grows and the desire of the cat to keep his meaning hidden increases. So be alert, kits, because you never know what the key to a riddle might be.

There are some rules to this, of course — otherwise we'd drive ourselves mad with half-truths and veiled words! Above all, don't speak in tahla all the time — true, the Qualmi do this, but that is Seline's will for them, not ours. Save tahla for the secrets that truly need protecting, or when you think you might be overheard by another; if you do it too often, not only do you frustrate your friends, you offer those who might be watching you more chances to learn the patterns of your enigmas. Second, be descriptive — do not use mundane words and phrases when more eloquent metaphors will do. A person is not simply happy, she is "filled with joy like a rising balloon." Anger isn't just an emotion but "a howling wind of searing fury." The more complicated the metaphor, the more of a reputation you acquire for your cleverness, not to mention the more safely guarded the secret itself is. References to other things — animal ways and lore for catkind, history and pop culture for humans — can also make a tahla more obscure, but one must then be careful to learn if the other person knows the reference or things fall apart very quickly. Never teach outsiders the ways of the tahla — doing so not only reveals our secrets, but betrays the trust of every cat the teacher has ever come in contact with.

And last of all, nothing is ever told as oneself — you may say "I heard so-and-so," but never "I *did* so-and-so." If your audience is clever enough, they'll learn the difference. Tahla is not the time for bragging, and a cat who uses it for such quickly discovers what her fellows really think of her!

Taghairm

When it comes for times of bragging — and teaching, and praising, and just relaxing — then one is speaking of the taghairm. You see the trappings around you right now: a good fire, fresh food, comfortable seats and stories to tell. All these things help make up a taghairm, but they are not the true essence of one. The real reason we hold a taghairm is that deep within us, we are all lonely. Our roads are difficult, and walking them alone wears down all of us in time; without a way to gather with others who understand us and pass along what we have learned to ears that will listen, we would surely go mad. Thus the gatherings, with all their ritual and ceremony — since we do not meet often, we do our best to make it memorable when we do!

Most of the time the host sets the rules and provides the refreshments for the gathering; another Bastet — known as the lorespeaker — is chosen to run the taghairm itself, from the opening tale to stirring the last embers as dawn arrives. If any disputes arise, the lorespeaker mediates them and sees that appropriate punishments are given to those found guilty of crimes against their fellow cats. Outsiders are never welcome such gatherings; while Kin may occasionally be allowed to listen to portions, a taghairm is too private and too



dear to the Bastet involved to allow others into the ceremony. Otherwise, the only requirement is that every cat present provide some tale or share at least one secret with the gathered Folk, and most such contests easily last the night as each cat tries to outdo the one before him!

If tahla best expresses our spirits, then the taghairm is the heart of our kind — it keeps everything moving in sync, and the ancient rhythm it provides is a common ground among the often-fractious tribes of the Bastet. Soon you will come to appreciate this feeling, kits, for nothing in this world can quite equal the feeling of having a time you can truly be at home once more.

Hanshii

Every species competes with the others — it is Gaia's will. Fighting for survival keeps us all strong and ensures that a balance is maintained. Still, we are a proud race as well, and unfortunately it is all too common for two of the Folk to have differences with each other that call for some sort of confrontation before they are resolved. For this reason, we have the tradition of Hanshii, or formal challenge, where such grudges can be settled once and for all. The times and numbers of our Kind being what they are, Hanshii are almost never to the death, though I hear that some Simba are insane enough to seek each other's destruction in this fashion. Exactly what the challenge is depends on the host and the tribes of the Bastet in question, although the host's rules take precedence over anything else. Some Hanshii are riddle contests or other tests of the mind, while others are the more traditional duels and tests of strength or endurance. All Hanshii are magically enforced, though — no Gifts or other outside help is permitted, and cheaters are automatically detected by the host, usually with harsh consequences. When it is over, the matter is considered settled, and those who wish to keep nursing the same old hatred had best do it privately or face the wrath of the Folk.

If you are ever involved in Hanshii, carry yourselves with honor and remember to leave your feud behind when the challenge is over. If you do, you will earn great respect in the eyes of others, even if you lose the challenge itself. No one likes a sore loser or a gloating winner, after all. At the same time, however, remember one thing, especially if you are dealing with the Simba or others known for their temper — some cats refuse to let their old grudges lie, even after Hanshii, so stay ready until you're sure the danger has passed. It may not seem very noble, but it is better than falling to the claws of another who won't accept the ways of our Folk.

Jamak

Though we are cut off from the spirit realms by the actions of the dogs, that doesn't mean we have no contact with our spirit cousins. Through our Gifts, we can summon and speak to the multitude of chaya or even cross claws with them if the need is great. Some relationships go deeper still, however — for many Bastet, one spirit above all others calls out with words of friendship and wisdom. Should the cat enter into a bond with this spirit, it becomes her Jamak, or spirit



guardian, much the same as the totem spirits of the Pure Ones. In return for pledging aid to each other and certain other demands of loyalty, the two agree to protect each other, pass on information and otherwise ease the other's steps through this world. Solitary as we are, this bond can be our only aid in times of trouble, and even in less dangerous times the companionship a Jamak offers is always welcome as we make our way through the depths of night. Some cats follow one Jamak all their lives, while others pledge service for a year at a time, and still others take no Jamak at all, according to the wishes of each Bastet. So long as you part on friendly terms, it isn't considered rude to switch allegiances this way, although those who earn a bad reputation in the spirit lands will find it hard to get another Jamak to accept them.

Should you wish to take on a Jamak bond, remember to honor the demands of your spirit ally — after all, if you cannot be bothered to respect the wishes of a friend you chose to associate with, what good are you at keeping your word with anyone else? Make sure you treat them as you would have a close friend treat you, and should your ways part in time, do so with an embrace and a smile so that no hard feelings follow either of you. Our contact with the spirit realm is tenuous enough; do not further endanger it by angering the *chaya*.

Den-Realms

Though they are rare indeed these days, some Bastet still hold lands where the crossing between spirit and matter is possible for our kind. These territories, known as Den-Realms to our kind, take on the shape their owner's desires, and act as a mighty fortress or clever hiding place for Bastet in danger. You will know when you cross into the land that corresponds to another cat's Den-Realm — a tingle runs down your spine, and the world shimmers before your eyes. If you do, be respectful, and ask permission of the owner through howling or however else you can; most of the time this isn't a problem, but trespassing is a serious crime among our kind, and the owner is within her rights to hunt down those who cross without her permission, so heed my words, for your own safety if not for your manners. In addition, as scarce as they are, most Den-Realms are also the territory of powerful cats, who make very poor enemies for young kits such as yourselves! Most such places are found in the wilderness, where we can still patrol our lands undisturbed, but a few can now be found in cities as well, especially ones with a long history among our kind. It is said that any site might become a Den-Realm, but creating one anew is the stuff of epic tales, and defending a territory once it is claimed is another matter as well.

How do you find a Den-Realm? These days, most are passed down from elder to successor, although some are won by force of claw or guile. Unless one is of sufficient standing, however, one can expect to have the Den-Realm stripped from one's paws rather quickly — they are too rare and too sacred to entrust to young ones such as yourselves. But fear not — perhaps one day your adventures will earn you a territory of your own, where you and your land truly are one. It is a dream any cat considers worth fighting for.



The Pride

If it has not been drummed into you yet, we Bastet keep mostly to ourselves; even this seems to be changing lately, if only a little bit. For one thing, we have come to value our Kin more than ever — our numbers are too small to allow us to stand by while harm befalls them. Even nonblood relations who prove themselves loyal and useful to our cause may become part of our pride, and all we choose to call family deserve the best protection we can give them. They are our future; without family and friends, the Bastet would quickly die off.

What's more, the sheer size of many of the threats we face as a Folk demand that we act in concert with each other more and more often, forming raiding parties, strategy councils or war bands as suits the task before us. Bagheera and Simba in particular have always had a history of traveling in such parties — known as prides or taklah, though most Bastet would consider comparison of such to the Simba groups an insult — but these days find many Bastet traveling together for companionship and protection.

Prides are quite small compared to the packs that the dogs run in, with more than three or four Bastet considered a sizable group, but still, they are becoming more common. Not that getting along is an easy task — as I have said, we are a proud folk and don't take well to orders or living without much privacy — but the results prove that the means are in fact justified. Should you find other Bastet who wish to join up with you in this fashion, greet them with as much friendship as you can manage, but remember that our kind is still best suited to working alone, so such groups tend to fall apart as the stresses of time and our nature take their toll. I must say that I have seen several of these prides in my time, and I could only envy the company that I saw there, whatever the ultimate outcome might have been.

Fellow Killi

We are but one of many, with many other changing cousins around the world. Some of them, like the dogs, bear us bad blood and have warred with us in the past, while others such as the raven-folk have been our allies for many centuries. Listen well, kits, for these lessons may save your skin should you come across one of the other Folk in the night....

Ananasi — Blood-drinkers and skulkers in the shadows; we do not consider ourselves kin to the spider-folk, except in the most basic of senses, and we do not involve ourselves in their wars. Fortunately, they seem to return the favor, and seldom trouble us or our Kin. That is the way we like it.

Corax — They have a similar purpose to ours — watching others and gathering lore — but they are the children of Helios, not Seline, and tend to reveal secrets rather than keep them. Also, they are poor warriors and flee when others fight; still, their perspective is often refreshing, and they make excellent scouts if properly praised for their information.



Garou — Not all of the wolves are bad — their Pure Ones have had ties with the Pumonca for a long time, and some of the other tribes such as the Silent Striders, Stargazers, Black Furies and the Children of Gaia have made peace with us — but there's still too much bad blood between our races for us to ever get along very well. If you meet one, return friendship or insults in kind, as offered. Just be careful, and remember that they run in packs.

Gurahl — Wise shamans and noble warriors. It's a shame the Garou slaughtered them — surely we could use their talents now! Should one wake from hibernation, treat him with respect, as he has survived far more than most of us have seen.

Kitsune — Elusive fox-changers of the East, I haven't heard much about them, but what I've heard suggests that they're something of a mix, much like the Ajaba: clever like the best of us and fierce like the most warlike wolves. It is said that the Khan know more about them, but if they do, they're not telling.

Mokolé — Like the Gurahl, they were slaughtered until they could endure no more and have now retreated from the world, dreaming of better times. Tread lightly around them and mind your manners — they are not famous for their patience, and many have jaws that can swallow a full-grown cat whole.

Nagah — The snake-shifters are said to be extinct, but they are a treacherous lot, and if anyone would be able to fake their own demise, surely it's them. Listen carefully to the wind's whispering, and be careful in the tall grass.

Nuwisha — Laughter is fine, but surely they must see that the world needs more than jokes and stories! If they would learn to take things more seriously from time to time, their talent with the spirit worlds would be a great asset to us all.

Ratkin — These vermin are bearers of disease and have brought much suffering to our Kin and countless other mortals over time. I have seen enough pain in this lifetime alone; while humans must be controlled, theirs is not the way.

Rokea — Despite what you may have been told, most cats actually like water — it's being hosed down by idiot monkeys that they find intolerable! Even so, however, the oceans are not our territory, and we trust the sharks to tend their own. Should you meet one, be polite, then swim away as fast as you can.

Hengyokai — Khan tell of how Asian shapechangers routinely band together across species lines in order to fight the minions of Asura. If this is really true, I would love to know how they manage to get along so well — perhaps there are lessons we could learn from them.

Chaya — Chaya are a mysterious, ever-changing lot — they are often our only constant companions, but they are ever more fickle than we are. Many have no qualms about committed terrible deeds alongside caring ones, so long



as it suits their whim. They also allow us to keep in contact with each other and spread word of our deeds, so be sure to treat them nicely! No matter what you do, remember that each spirit always acts according to its nature — no more, no less. Do not punish them for doing their duty or attempt to pervert them to different ends. Things will turn out badly.

Asura — The Unmaker's voice echoes all around us, constantly tempting us with the empty luxuries of the "civilized" world or the hungry eyes of the Third World; learn how to drown out these voices, and listen to the voice of Seline from within.

Lexicon

Common Terms

Ahu — The beginning and end of everything; the Deep Umbra.

Asura — Both singular and plural, this term refers to the wicked spirits (Banes) that speed the destruction of the world.

Caliah — The oral tradition of the Bastet, especially tales that concern the First Days. Usually recited at a taghairm or other ceremony.

Cahlash, the Unmaker — The Dark Father; technically the same entity as what the Garou call the Wyrn, but to the Bastet, Cahlash is essential to the universe, a personification of entropy. Interestingly, both Cahlash and his brother Rahjah are known collectively as "The King of Cats." Bastet view him as sinister, seductive and as the Author of Mystery.

Chatro — The huge saber-tooth war form that all Bastet attain between Crinos and Feline forms.

Chaya — Umbral dwellers, shadows at the brink of reality; spirits.

Crinos — The half-human form of Moon-Rage, when the power of Seline brings forth the strongest elements of a Bastet's nature and focuses them into a mystical killing machine.

Dakat — The traditional name for a fomor. Seen by most Bastet as children who got too close to a fire and were burned beyond recognition; better to put them out of their mystery.

Den-Realm — An Umbral territory staked out by a powerful Bastet. Creating a Den-Realm is hard work, and violating it is a deadly crime.

Folk, the — A casual term for Bastet; also applied more loosely to all the Changing Breeds.

Gaia — The Earth. Unlike the Garou, wercats consider Gaia a smaller player in the cosmic drama; Her death would mean the death of all those who depend on Her, but not the end of existence as a whole.

Hakarr — Bastet ceremonial blade, similar to the African hunga-munga. Like the Garou klaive, the hakarr is a favored dueling weapon.



Allies in Shadow: Other Supernatural Creatures

Psst! Listen up as Whik Fools-the-Monkeys, wisest vagabond of the Celtican tribe, whispers tales about the other denizens of the night.

Hey, you didn't think it was just the Changing Breeds wandering around this beautiful rock, did you? Hah! They won't admit it, most of them, but believe me, vampires ain't the half of it that's out there, kit. So listen up, because if they catch me telling you these fairy tales, we're *both* going to bed without dinner.

Wizards — We share common blood with them — remember Palar and Akuma? — and we've been hanging out together ever since. Most of 'em tend to throw their lot in with one of the Star Family, and you can practically feel it rolling off their backs, especially the Cahlash ones. As a rule, though, there really aren't any rules with wizards — they're as different as people get, and it's best to judge them as you meet them. (Hey, if you could shake reality like an Ech-A-Sketch, wouldn't you probably turn out a little funky too?) So if you see one who looks like they'll understand what we're about, rub up close and remind them of our blood ties; if a creepy one starts getting too close, run faster than you can say "vivisection."

Faeries — A lot of folks think faeries are all puppy dogs and ice cream, but spit on that! The Unseelie fae do stuff for kicks that'll make your fur turn white, and even the nice folks once held us in slavery for a few centuries just because they thought we were "cute." Sure, that was a long time ago, and the ones that are around now have evolved a bit since then, but you just don't forget a thing like slavery overnight. Whatever you do, never underestimate them. They draw their power from dreams, and dreams are some of the strongest things in the world.

Ghosts — We don't have much to do with the spirits of the dead — not our problem — but that doesn't mean they aren't there. As long as you're respectful when you make a kill or tread on their turf, you shouldn't have much of a problem with them. They're too wrapped up in their own loose threads to do much to anyone.

Vampires — Whoa. Most of them have a really heavy dose of dark magnetism, and that tends to draw our kind like flies. Most of them have all kinds of cool secrets, too, and that makes it twice as hard to avoid getting caught up in their games. Just remember a couple of things — immortal beings make seriously bad enemies, first of all, and second, no secret is worth your skin or your soul, let alone one of your friends'. Dance with 'em? Sure. Take them back to your place? Only if you're ready for the long dirt nap.



Hanshii — Ritual combat, usually to decide territorial rights or settle personal conflicts. These contests may be riddle games, formal duels or fang-and-claw warfare.

Homid — The human form, or human breed, of a werecat.

Jamaa — Powerful spirits, like Celestines and Incarna. Akin to gods, but still considered "part of the family." See also **Nyota Jamaa**.

Jamak — Spirit allies who aid a werecat in return for favors and friendship. Similar to the totems of the Garou, although the relationship between Bastet and Jamak is more egalitarian.

Karoush — The werecat Litany.

Kheuar — The shared language of all Bastet.

Kit — A young werecat, a baby cat or a newly Changed pupil learning the ways of catkind from a kuasha.

Killi — Fellow shapechangers, gifted by Seline and Gaia (Garou, Corax, etc.).

Kuasha — Literally, "mist." The mentor who guides a newly Changed Bastet through her First Year and teaches her the ways of catkind.

Lune — One of the moon's messengers.

Madness, The — Also known as the Burning Times; the European witch craze of the 1400s-1700s, during which cats were demonized and the Ceilican are believed to have been destroyed. Also used to refer to the general colonization rush that occurred during this time.

Nala, the First Mother — The half-insane Mother of creation, known as the Wyld by the Garou. It is her dance that keeps all of creation in motion.

Nyota Jamaa — "Star Family"; what the Garou call the Triat — Nala, Rahjah and Cahlash. Also known simply as the *Jamaa*, a name that applies to less powerful spirits.

Padaa — A sense that combines smell and taste at a distance, utilized by opening the mouth, flaring the nostrils and inhaling. This brings the air across the tongue and an organ in the roof of the mouth.

Pride — Technically one's family, but many Bastet use it for their allies, friends or dependents. Also, a group of Bastet that travel together.

Pryio — One's "Moon Favor," a personality tendency based upon the time of day a Bastet passes through her First Change. The werecat's true essence, not the face she shows to others except in the most general ways. Similar to Garou auspices, although Pryio carry no social roles or special Gifts.

Rahjah, the Maker — Known as the Weaver to the Garou, it is the spirit's relentless drive to impress Nala. Unfortunately, Rahjah seldom knows when to stop and attempts to bind everything into rigid forms and enforce static reality.

Seline — Gaia's sympathetic sister and mother to the Changing Breeds who loves the Bastet above all else. Her favor is considered a sign of great



destiny for a Bastet, and most cats go out of their way to ensure that she is appeased before acting.

Shadow Folk — General term for other supernatural creatures — vampires, faeries, ghosts, etc. — but not other shapeshifters.

Sokto — The huge protohuman form between Homid and Crinos forms.

Taghairm — A Bastet gathering, usually hosted in a Den-Realm or other secure location and used to exchange information and pleasantries. Most often performed under a full moon, but not always.

Tahla — A secret wrapped in the form of a story or riddle. Those who understand it gain wisdom; those who don't obviously don't deserve the enlightenment it offers.

Taklah — An all-werecat pride gathered for a common purpose.

Tribe — One of the nine werecat races. Technically 11 tribes once existed. The Khara (weresaber-teeths) are now extinct, the Ceilican are believed destroyed, and the Ajaba (werehyenas) have been exiled and aren't called family any longer.

War of Rage — The genocidal war for dominance that the Garou waged on the other Changing Breeds. Although it happened over 10,000 years ago, many old grudges still linger.

Yava — A tribal secret, hidden from all outsiders, that supposedly grants another being power over you if learned. The most tightly guarded of all Bastet lore, these are exposed only under the most extreme circumstances, if even then.

Formalities and Rank Titles

Akaa — "Truthchaser"; honorific for an equal of either gender. Also the title bestowed on Bastet of the second Rank.

Bon Bhat — "Great parent"; respectful term for an elder. Often used to address the host of a taghairm; also the title bestowed on Bastet of the fifth Rank.

Buree Pa — An ancient secret revealed only during a great ritual, usually as a reward for some service or accomplishment.

Hamaal — "One family"; formal term for catkind, which excludes all other races as inferiors.

Ilani — "Wonder favored"; a flattering address for a Bastet of some notoriety. Also the title bestowed on Bastet of the fourth Rank.

Naa — A werecat who comes from nowhere; an outsider, a stranger who hasn't earned the trust of others yet.

Shining Child — Archaic term for humanity.

Tekhmet — "Little one"; a condescending address from an elder to a youngster. Also the title bestowed on Bastet of first Rank.



Tilau — “Accomplished friend”; a respectful title of address for an experienced and prosperous werecat. Also the title bestowed on Bastet of the third Rank.

Watua — “Children”; affectionate term (if somewhat condescending) for feline Kinfolk and other true cats.

Slang

Brain-Wading — Spying on someone’s thoughts through telepathy or other means.

Caloo — A wild party or other celebration.

Declaw — To mess up another Bastet, usually as a punishment.

Dog — A Garou. Highly derogatory; also highly common.

Ghat — An insult directed at one Bastet who sleeps with another.

Housecat — A Bastet who’s forgotten her wild roots; very insulting.

Meshing — Going into cyberspace, or hacking.

Monkey — A human, especially a loudmouthed or stupid one.

Ngiri — “Warthog”; favorite insult for the overly vain or pompous.

Playing Blood-Tag — Hunting humans or other outsiders, especially in hot spots such as the Amazon or the African grasslands, for fun or revenge.

Puss-in-Boots — Derogatory term for teaming up with a human, especially in an “inferior” role. (“He pulled a Puss-in-Boots and took orders from that monkey!”)

Ratshit — Panic, usually cowardly. (“She went ratshit and bolted.”)

Scratching One from Nine — Pulling off a really close escape. (“I scratched one from nine getting outta *that* one!”)

Spiderface — A mage, especially an evil one. Comes from the creepy sensation that many Bastet get from looking a mage in eye for the first time.

Yabba — A moron; possibly a corruption of the term “Yava.”



Character Creation

Character Creation Process

- **Step One: Character Concept** — Who and what are you?

Choose Nature, Demeanor and Pryio

Choose a breed

Choose a tribe

- **Step Two: Select Attributes** — What are your basic capabilities?

Prioritize Trait Attributes (seven primary, five secondary and three tertiary)

Choose Traits

- **Step Three: Select Advantages** — What do you know and what can you do?

Choose five Abilities

Choose three Basic Gifts (from breed, tribe or general in any combination)

Choose five Backgrounds

Note Renown (three Traits, in any combination)

- **Step Four: Finishing Touches** — Fill in the details.

Record Rage & Willpower (determined by tribe)

Record Gnosis (determined by breed)

Choose Negative Traits (if any)

Select Merits and/or Flaws, if desired (see page 164)

- **Step Five: Spark of Life** — Narrative descriptions and other details

Natures and Demeanors

For complete descriptions, see *Laws of the Wild*.

Architect, Avant-Garde, Bravo, Bureaucrat, Caregiver, Competitor, Confidant, Conformist, Conniver, Critic, Cummudgeon, Deviant, Director, Explorer, Fanatic, Gallant, Gambler, Jester, Judge, Loner, Martyr, Penitent, Predator, Rebel, Reluctant Bastard, Reveler, Showoff, Survivor, Traditionalist, Visionary.



Pryio

- **Daylight:** As straightforward and honest as sunlight itself, you wear your heart on your sleeve and take all challenges head-on.
- **Twilight:** Forever stepping in the shadows between day and night, you have a complex view of life and prefer artistic, layered perspectives to plainer ones.
- **Night:** You are as deep and mysterious as a moonless sky, and shroud yourself in secrecy at all times.

Breed

- **Homid:** Born of human parents, your new life is a mystery and an adventure.

Nickname: Monkeychild

Initial Gnosis: 2

Restricted Abilities: *Primal Urge*

Breed Gifts: (choose one) *Cat Claws, Eavesdropper's Ear, Sweet Hunter's Smile*

- **Metis:** The offspring of a censured union between Bastet, you have a permanent disability but a deep link with primal creation.

Nickname: Halfbreed

Initial Gnosis: 3

Breed Gifts: (choose one) *Blinking Moonbeam Gaze, Create Element, Sense Primal Nature*

- **Feline:** Big cats birthed and raised you, whether in the wild or in captivity. Your kind are all but gone, and you must fight to survive.

Nickname: Wildcat

Initial Gnosis: 4

Restricted Abilities: *Bureaucracy, Computer, Drive, Finance, Firearms, Law, Medicine, Politics, Repair, Science, Security.*

Breed Gifts: (choose one) *Killer's Leap, Kitten's Cry, Mark as Mine*

Tribes

- **Bagheera (werepanther/wereleopard):** Wise travelers, hungry for knowledge and even-tempered — for shapechangers.

Initial Willpower: 3

Initial Rage: 1

Tribe Gifts: (choose one) *Humbaba's Escape, Lawgiver's Legacy, Treeclimber*

- **Balam (werejaguar):** Furious defenders of the wilderness, they hold a grudge against whites for demolishing their ancient peoples.

Initial Willpower: 2



Initial Rage: 3

Tribe Gifts: (choose one) *Hunter's Mists*, *Smoking Mirror*, *Storm of Pests*

- **Bubasti (mystic Egyptian werecat):** Mysterious and sinister, these cats pursue forbidden knowledge to regain their ancestors' glory — and their own.

Initial Willpower: 3

Initial Rage: 1

Tribe Gifts: (choose one) *Alms to the Poor*, *Mousemaze*, *Scholar's Friend*

- **Ceilican (faerie werecat):** Thought extinct, they disguise their survival in erratic behavior and misdirection.

Initial Willpower: 2

Initial Rage: 2

Tribe Gifts: (choose one) *Banish Burning*, *Laughing Last*, *Satyr's Wisdom*

- **Khan (weretiger):** The defenders of the earth and fists of the gods, they hold strength and honor as the greatest achievements.

Initial Willpower: 1

Initial Rage: 3

Tribe Gifts: (choose one) *Rhino's Favor*, *Ricepaper Walk*, *Skin of Jade*

- **Pumonca (werecougar):** Keepers of their native soil, these wanderers maintain a deep connection to the elemental powers.

Initial Willpower: 2

Initial Rage: 2

Tribe Gifts: (choose one) *Mockingbird's Mirror*, *Stonework*, *Wanderer's Boon*

- **Qualmi (werelynx):** Riddling shamans, these odd creatures delight in puzzles and enigmas.

Initial Willpower: 3

Initial Rage: 1

Tribe Gifts: (choose one) *Breakfast of Stones*, *No Hidden Thing*, *Turned Fur*

- **Simba (werelion):** The dark kings who, if they could, would rule all catkind and dominate all within their grasp.

Initial Willpower: 1

Initial Rage: 3

Tribe Gifts: (choose one) *Armor of Kings*, *Majesty*, *Submit*

- **Swara (werecheetah):** Elusive and high-strung, they hold a deeper bond with the spirit world than others of their kind.

Initial Willpower: 3

Initial Rage: 1

Tribe Gifts: (choose one) *Diamond Claws*, *Impala's Flight*, *Weight of a Heart*



Attributes

For complete Trait descriptions, see **Laws of the Wild**.

Physical: Athletic, Brawny, Brutal, Dexterous, Enduring, Energetic, Ferocious, Graceful, Lithe, Nimble, Quick, Resilient, Robust, Rugged, Stalwart, Steady, Tenacious, Tireless, Tough, Vigorous, Wiry

Social: Alluring, Beguiling, Charismatic, Charming, Commanding, Compassionate, Dignified, Diplomatic, Elegant, Eloquent, Empathetic, Expressive, Friendly, Genial, Gorgeous, Ingratiating, Intimidating, Magnetic, Persuasive, Seductive, Witty

Mental: Alert, Attentive, Calm, Clever, Creative, Cunning, Dedicated, Determined, Discerning, Disciplined, Insightful, Intuitive, Knowledgeable, Observant, Patient, Rational, Reflective, Shrewd, Vigilant, Wily, Wise

Abilities

For complete Ability descriptions, see **Laws of the Wild**.

Animal Ken, Athletics, Brawl, Bureaucracy, Computer, Dodge, Drive, Empathy, Enigmas, Expression, Finance, Firearms, Intimidation, Investigation, Law, Leadership, Love, Linguistics, Medicine, Meditation, Melee, Occult, Performance, Primal Urge, Repair, Scrounge, Security, Stealth, Survival

Gifts

Beginning Bastet characters receive three Basic Gifts which may be chosen from their breed or tribe as well as the general pool, in any combination the player desires. Thus a Bastet could choose two breed Gifts and one tribe Gift, three general Gifts, two tribe Gifts and one general, and so on. Available Gifts from breeds and tribes are listed in the short descriptions above, and Basic general Gifts are listed below. Longer descriptions of all these Gifts and more are listed in the Gifts section on page 169.

General Gifts: Banish Sickness, Call Spirits, Catfeet, Cat Sight, Command Attention, Dowsing, Eerie Eyes, First Slash, Lick Wounds, Night Terror, Night's Passage, Open Seal, Pathfinder's Pride, Razor Claws, Sense Magic, Sense of the Prey, Sense the Truth, Sense Unmaker's Hand, Silent Stalking, Shriek, Spirit's Sight, Swipe, Treeclimber, Touch the Mind



Backgrounds

For complete Background descriptions, see *Laws of the Wild*.
Den-Realm, Fetish, Influence, Jamak, Kinfolk, Pure Breed, Rites, Secrets, Trinket

Renown Traits

Cleverness: *Clever, Crafty, Inspired, Inventive, Pragmatic, Profound, Respected, Revered, Sacred, Scholarly, Spiritual, Venerable, Wise*

Ferocity: *Bold, Brash, Brave, Courageous, Daring, Exalted, Feared, Fearless, Fierce, Glorious, Imposing, Impressive, Spirited, Superb*

Honor: *Admirable, Commendable, Dutiful, Eminent, Esteemed, Fair, Honorable, Impartial, Just, Noble, Objective, Proud, Reputable, Trusted, Virtuous*

Negative Traits

For complete descriptions of these Traits, see *Laws of the Wild*.

Physical Negative Traits: *Clumsy, Cowardly, Decrepit, Delicate, Docile, Flabby, Lame, Lethargic, Puffy, Sickly*

Social Negative Traits: *Callous, Condescending, Dull, Naïve, Obnoxious, Paranoid, Repugnant, Shy, Tactless, Untrustworthy*

Mental Negative Traits: *Forgetful, Gullible, Ignorant, Impatient, Oblivious, Predictable, Shortsighted, Submissive, Witless*

Tribes

The Last of the Twilight Folk

There are nine Bastet tribes still in existence, although one of them (the Ceilican) is still widely believed to be extinct, and another (the Bubasti) is doing its best to keep a low profile as well. Unlike the mixed heritage of the Garou, Bastet tribes are based on racial distinctions, the blood they have inherited from a thousand generations of cats before them; therefore, a werecat can no more change her tribe than she could change her species. And while they may organize into family groups or loose gatherings when they assemble, as a whole most tribes have very little in the way of politics and intrigue among their own kind. There is a sense of community among the Bastet, after a fashion, but it's unlike anything that most other Changing Breeds can understand, a life of freedom and solitude punctuated by occa-



sional gatherings of great emotional intensity. Outsiders may scratch their heads and wonder, but the Bastet simply smile and go their own way; it's a cat thing.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it should be noted that what follows are extremely broad tribal generalizations — as might be expected, Bastet are individuals above anything else, and few of them would care to conform to some mythical “tribal profile” even if they were aware one existed. Bastet characters are perhaps the best expression of this at all, and players should create werecats who have chosen their own unique path.

Bagheera

Legend tells that the werepanthers and the wereleopards (for they are one in the same for this tribe) were ordained the arbiters of catkind, the judges who police fellow Bastet and others alike for corruption and injustice. This role never quite materialized, but those who know these cats can easily see the qualities that gave rise to this legend, for the Bagheera represent a rare balance of qualities among their kind. While the Khan and Simba rage, and the Bubasti and Qualmi delve into arcane secrets, the Bagheera represent a balance between the two extremes, at once vengeful and scholarly, reserved and full of righteous fury. What's more, Bagheera also represent a bridge between humanity and catkind, feeling close to both worlds. They often have a level of respect for ordinary mortals that is considered extravagant by their fellow Bastet. Patience has limits, of course — humans who commit serious crimes or despoil the environment often find themselves the targets of taklah, Bagheera war parties, who will hunt them down for a quick trial and often a lethal sentence for those found guilty. In the past, Bagheera made overtures to other Killi, including supporting efforts to end the Impergium. While many of these pacts have been forgotten, some Bagheera still maintain contacts among the Silent Striders, Children of Gaia, even the Black Furies. To the panthers, such alliances are simply good politics, although their relations with other changers have occasionally gotten them in trouble with more-traditional Simba.

It is said that the panthers have three sides to their souls — one is wise, inquisitive, and at peace with itself; the second is passionate, temperamental and given to extremes of emotion; and the third state is rarely seen, but perhaps it is the most powerful of all: a killing rage that knows no bounds, and can cause even mighty Khan to turn tail. This is not to say that the Bagheera are unstable by nature; while their kits still have freedom to make some mistakes, even the youngest ones know that some rules must not be broken. Young Bagheera are taught that life is a threefold journey: *akari*, or “searching;” the *pourra*, or “foundation;” and the *doyala*, or “passing on.” For them, it is more important to find a cause worth supporting or a place worth defending than to accumulate temporal power or glory. Bagheera can still chase Renown with the best of them — getting things done is easier when



people respect you — but most Bagheera consider their life to be just one link in an endless chain, accepting and passing on strength from one generation to another.

As a tribe, their tireless pursuit of justice and ecological preservation has earned them a reputation for fairness and a strong sense of honor, but in recent times it has also caused them to run afoul of Pentex, with disastrous results for the Bagheera. Sensing the scope of this threat, the elders have retreated for now, gathering intelligence where they can. When they finally make their move, one can rest assured that the results will be felt all the way to the top of that corporate ladder.

Tribal Home: Like their feline kin, most Bagheera call Africa and Southeast Asia home (at least for a time) and are the most numerous of all the Bastet tribes. As their ancestors before them, the largest number of Bagheera dwell in the jungles and cities of India, but thanks to the wanderlust of the akari phase, Bagheera can be found just about anywhere in the world.

Culture and Kinfolk: A great number of Bagheera are Indian by descent, and even those that are not usually feel some familiar tie to that area. Raised amid a mixture of Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Catholic and tribal culture, most Bagheera have a strong sense of honor and duty, and one who breaks the Karoush is looked on as the lowest of the low and punished without hesitation. Many Bagheera Kinfolk share this strong sense of justice, and most are scrupulously honest, hardworking folk who occupy low-level governmental positions where they feel they can make a real difference in society. In the wild, leopards and panthers are still plentiful, so Bagheera have no trouble finding feline mates, ensuring few metis Bagheera and a good mix of feline and homid members.

Organization: Bagheera are largely solitary creatures; neophyte panthers often stay in contact with elders who occasionally give them advice or ask them to carry out a task but otherwise leave the young ones to their own devices. The exception to this is the war cry, which is used to summon and direct a taklah — usually only elders make give the war cry, although in times of emergency younger Bagheera may make it as well. When the taklah is assembled, the highest-Ranking among them leads the hunt, judges the accused and assigns sentence.

Secrets Sought: Bagheera tend to be attracted to political gossip, cultural lore (etiquette is a particular weakness of theirs), archaic or secret languages, and supernatural puzzles of any kind. Most Bagheera shy away from occult lore, since such studies often present unacceptable ethical difficulties, but some leopards cannot resist the call.

Appearance: Most Bagheera have black fur, although those of African ancestry may have spots and yellow-brown fur instead. A few tribe members display the tricolor markings of the clouded leopard, but they are rare indeed. The many different species of panthers and leopards in the world leads to a fairly wide variety of feline forms, but as a rule Bagheera are sleek and powerful, with eyes that seem to show centuries of knowledge, even in a young kit.



Initial Willpower: Three

Initial Rage: One

Yava

- Bagheera sleep deeply during the New Moon. Once they slumber, nothing short of violence can awaken them.

- Make a trail of salt; a panther will follow it from beginning to end without stopping.

- Blessing a leopard's prey with Aabhaya (a hand gesture signifying "protection") will force the cat to flee unless his rage is just.

Tribe Gifts: *Humbaba's Escape, Lawgiver's Legacy, Treeclimber*

Outlook: Bagheera are liked by most other Bastet, although their usual balanced, mildly detached demeanor can sometimes get on the nerves of their fellows. They deeply distrust the Bubasti, finding their ethics repellent and believing them to have made a bargain too big for them to handle, but they generally ignore them unless given reason to do otherwise. Bagheera also believe the Simba have fallen from the state they once assumed by right, but direct conflict is always the last resort of the Bagheera, especially among fellow cats. Qualmi are dear to their hearts, and many hours have been passed trading riddles and lore between these two tribes. Indeed, most Bagheera live by a simple motto: Guide the innocent, preserve the righteous, destroy the corrupted.

Balam

Born of two ancient spiritual civilizations who merged together before even the Aztecs and the Olmecs came to the land, the werejaguars are the last pure line of this noble lineage and defend the jungles of their ancestors with a zeal and ferocity that has become the stuff of legend even in modern times. These early Balam were seen as two-sided figures, noble and spiritual one moment, volatile and bloodthirsty the next, and commanded great sacrifices from the population wherever they went. Indeed, they walked as gods in the cities of those ancient societies, until the Spaniards came and brought their kingdoms crashing down with war, pestilence and slavery. Right on their heels came the European Garou, itching for another battle after the War of Rage, and the already xenophobic jaguars were drawn into a bloody battle for their homelands. Many jaguars fell in those terrible times, but even the victorious Garou spoke in awe of the great command of the jungle the brave cats had. So great, in fact, that when the Balam finally realized their only choice was to retreat and set up new Den-Realms deep in the heart of the rain forests, the Garou believed the werejaguars had fallen to extinction, and uneasy peace hung over the wilds of South America for the next 200 years.

That is, until the recent efforts of Pentex and its partners began tearing down the rain forests at a record pace, endangering the homes of the reclusive jaguars once more. Now the Balam are locked in another great conflict, but this time they fight with not only their usual passion and ferocity, but with the



strength of desperation as well — this time there is nowhere else to run. What's more, in their fury the Balam see *everyone* as invaders — settlers, Pentex, Garou, even other Bastet — and they are determined to drive them all from the land no matter what the cost. Previous generations of "Rotted-Hearts" (the name the Balam gave to the white conquerors and their descendants) spilled enough blood for a hundred lifetimes of vengeance, and the Balam are determined to see such debts paid in full.

Tribal Home: Few in number as it is, the vast majority of Balam are found in the rain forests of South America, where they wage the Amazon War against anyone who dares trespass upon their sacred lands. Most jaguars take great pains to establish and preserve a Den-Realm, known as a *tona*, and would sooner die than let it to be destroyed. The few Balam found outside the Amazon are typically on missions of importance to the tribe as a whole, such as reclaiming artifacts taken from the jungle or eliminating tribal enemies, and have little patience for modern diversions. There has been talk of sending a party of Balam to search for allies in their struggle, but to date the isolationist jaguars have yet to agree on such a course.

Culture and Kinfolk: Perhaps the greatest tragedy of the Balam is that underneath their siege mentality and the centuries of struggle they've endured, they have a rich culture full of reverent prayer ceremonies, an appreciation for music and an ancient tradition of sacred vision quests. Likewise, they are as warm with friends and Kin as they are merciless with their enemies, and the rare outsider who earns the trust of a jaguar can count on a friend for the rest of his life. Nearly all Balam and their Kinfolk are of South American descent, and most are full-blooded members of a local native tribe as well. Obviously, there are very, very few Balam of white descent; if there are any this generation, they are well hidden.

Organization: Balam have no true organization; when fighting off invaders, they may occasionally call upon others of their kind to form war parties, but most prefer to fight their own battles — a noble motive, but sadly one of the main reasons that they are losing the war. Most jaguars are quite contentious, even with each other, and will fight at the slightest provocation, making alliances short-lived and even dangerous at times.

Secrets Sought: Balam are avid collectors of any secrets regarding their own ancestors, both mortal and supernatural. Artwork, artifacts, cultural lore or other remnants of those societies are highly prized. Balam pay equal attention to spirit lore as well and go to great lengths to study from spirits who walked the same trails as their ancestors in order to learn the slightest detail of those times. Of course, any secrets that aid in destroying the invaders are also considered of great importance as well.

Appearance: Like the Bagheera, the jaguars have either black or yellow fur; black jaguars tend to fill the role of mystics and oracles, while yellow cats unleash the rage of the tribe, but in truth both kinds are capable of fulfilling either role. They tend to be short and stocky, making up for their relatively small forms with compact muscular power.



Initial Willpower: Two

Initial Rage: Three

Yava

- Demons feed the wrath of the Balam; send one against him, and he will rage into madness.

- Burn the heart of the jaguar and you destroy its soul forever.

- Jaguar feathers hold great power. If you find one, burn it by the great cat's face. Once it is ashes, the Balam will die.

Tribe Gifts: *Hunter's Mists, Smoking Mirror, Storm of Pests*

Outlook: The Balam are a tribe under siege, a claw's length from extinction; this mentality pervades all of their actions, on a personal level as well as a societal one. They are deeply suspicious of outsiders, even other Balam, and will make would-be allies work hard to earn their friendship. Once it is granted, however, the Balam will travel far to uphold the duties of such bonds, and any enemies their friends have become the Balam's sworn foes as well. Regarding other Bastet, they have a deep respect the martial talents of the Khan and feel a deep kinship with this other breed of cat so close to extinction. They honor the discipline of the Bagheera as well but feel that they are too far removed to offer them aid now. The other tribes are likewise inconsequential in the day-to-day life of the Balam, and so are given little regard.

Bubasti

Ever the clever ones, the Bastet have a popular saying of their own: Mystery loves company. Indeed, part of the attraction that has kept humans in awe and fear of catkind throughout the ages is the feeling that every cat, great and small, seems to know far more than it cares to reveal. While this attitude has also served to heighten persecution of cats from time to time — humans aren't famously tolerant of what they don't understand — on a much deeper level this secrecy serves to beguile those in the cat's presence, an attraction that wise Bastet use to their full advantage. And none know the lure of wisdom — or darkness — better than the Bubasti.

Descended from a now-extinct breed known as Kyphur cats, the Bubasti served the pharaohs as sorcerers and advisors, exchanging bits of their great wisdom for offerings and worship. They conducted arcane rituals in the deepest chambers of the pyramids, plumbing the darkness for its secrets. Tales persist to this day regarding the terrible sacrifices they would make — some human, some far worse. When the feuds of the vampire elders tore apart the land and caused the decline of the Nile civilization, the shadowcats swore revenge, and ever since then they have waged a bitter, bloody feud with vampires in general and the Followers of Set in particular. For all their power, it is a feud the Bubasti have largely lost, and such were their casualties that in time their fellow Bastet believed them extinct (though in truth few other cats mourned their passing). Only recently have the shadowcats begun to take the first small steps out of their native darkness once again, more numerous than they have been in centuries



and eager for revenge against those who wronged them in the past. They've returned from the shadows, and they've brought friends. The Followers of Set may be in for some nasty surprises in the very near future.

On a personal level, most Bubasti embody everything that is entrancing and appealing about the forbidden: dark and mysterious, consumed by an insatiable hunger for food as well as knowledge, their presence is subtle but compelling, even hypnotic. Those sensitive to the touch of Cahlash shy away from them, disturbed, but those who revel in the night fly to them like moths to a flame. Questions are everything to them, and most Bubasti are experts at a dozen arcane subjects and conversant in a dozen more. Of all Bastet, Bubasti are by far the most likely to learn mortal sorcery, and most aren't shy about studying its darker aspects, either. Though seemingly slow to anger, especially for shapechangers, Bubasti never forget a slight; most just prefer to retreat and plot more intricate forms of revenge than to simply tear apart offenders with their claws. Rest assured, however, that the offender *will* suffer — it's only a matter of time. Battling vampires for centuries gives one nothing if not patience, after all, and right now the Bubasti are still enjoying the cover of their "extinction" for as long as they can. When the time is right, they will reveal themselves once more, but for now they still largely keep to the shadows, waiting for the perfect moment to strike....

Tribal Home: The shadowcats originated in Egypt (which they call "Khem"), and the majority of them remain tied to that land still; they claim it's simply a sense of tradition and ancestral obligation, but others aren't so sure. Outside of Khem, Bubasti are also attracted to areas of great natural mystery and magical power, studying the region itself as well as any other supernatural creatures it attracts.

Culture and Kinfolk: Once the Bubasti bred and associated exclusively with the noble bloodlines of their land and had little use for those of lesser ancestry; the losses they've suffered in recent times have forced the shadowcats to adapt again and infuse their line with so-called "mongrel blood," so new Bubasti may spring from any walk of life. This shames older Bubasti deeply, but with so few left, they are in no position to argue with the decision. With the Kyphur cats extinct, the feline Kinfolk that Bubasti can still mate with are extraordinarily rare, and many of the tribe fear that they may disappear within a generation — this has given rise to sinister rumors of freakish magical experiments performed by the tribal elders in hopes of creating a new line to breed with, but as of yet such rumors remain simply gossip. Human Kinfolk of the Bubasti tend to be as strange as their Bastet relatives and can be found in any walk of life where secrecy and a nose for dangerous secrets is essential.

Organization: Confined to their own company for as long as they have been, Bubasti have responded by becoming remarkably unified, especially by Bastet standards — six elders, called kheper, rule the tribe and meet once a year to discuss business, plot strategy and dictate tribe policy. Said to be immortal, the kheper are the unquestioned heads of the tribe, and a new



member has not been inducted into their ranks for centuries. Serving each one are a group of two Bon Bhat and four Ilani, as well as a number of Tilau and Akas. As the current best count puts the tribe's number at a little over 50 members, such close contact is essential for survival, and those who step outside this network are disciplined severely. Direct orders are seldom given, but even young Bubasti know better than to refuse the "request" of one of their elders, especially the kheper. It is the responsibility of the Tilau and Akas to watch over the Tekhmet, who are monitored closely for loyalty and to ensure that the tribe's presence is not betrayed by the actions of a single careless kit. So tight is this scrutiny, in fact, that the Bubasti do not pass along their Yava until a shadowcat reaches the second Rank; these secrets could easily destroy the entire tribe, and the Followers of Set would do much to gain access to them. Young Bubasti are accordingly cautioned early on: "Better death than the serpent's kiss." Current rumors speak of the elders planning a great event where the Bubasti will fill the streets of Cairo and return Egypt to its former glory; most Bubasti dismiss this as nostalgic ranting, but with the vast mystical power the shadowcats hold, who can say for sure?

Secrets Sought: Bubasti treasure all manner of ancient and mystical lore, the more forbidden the better. Quite a few of their scholars are dedicated to collecting and analyzing lore about their fellow Killi and even other supernatural creatures. Of course, many Bubasti are greatly interested in Kindred secrets, especially any they can uncover about the Followers of Set.

Appearance: Bubasti are always jet black in feline form, and if one has ever been born with another color of fur — or even a just a marking of some kind, however small — no one has ever heard of it. Their eyes are large, bright and somehow disturbing, seeming to look straight to the souls of those they observe, and all Bubasti have disconcerting stares regardless of what form they're in.

Initial Willpower: Three

Initial Rage: One

Yava

- When all immortals of the tribe are slain, the tribe itself will die with them.

- The black soil of Khem is forever tied to the tribe; if all Bubasti in a generation flee the land, they will be the last of their kind.

- Bubasti are always hungry. Though no amount of food or drink will ease their craving, they will always eat what's put in front of them.

Tribe Gifts: *Alms to the Poor, Mousemaze, Scholar's Friend*

Outlook: Trusted by no one, the Bubasti have long since learned to rely on themselves first and other Bubasti second; other werewolves enter the picture much farther down the chain, and normal mortals seldom even merit a ranking at all. When circumstances dictate meeting with other Bastet, Bubasti typically act with aloof indifference, contributing what they must and always hinting that they know much more than they're letting on. Ill-suited



for direct confrontations, Bubasti prefer to escape would-be attackers and plot revenge from afar; when their plans are finally put in motion, enemies seldom know what hit them. It should also be noted that while the tribe as a whole has many rather sinister aspects (not to mention members), many shadowcats operate out of a strong sense of duty, feeling that it is their sacred charge to seek out and combat evil on its own terms. At worst, they know that they may doom themselves with their proximity to darkness, but they'll make it pay before it consumes them, and if others don't understand that, that's their problem. Unfortunately, few outsiders recognize such noble Bubasti when they see them, lumping them in with the wicked shadowcats that foul the tribe's name.

Ceilican

The first thing young Ceilican are taught is that they don't exist. No, not in some philosophical way, but in the very real sense that if this tribe's continued existence was to become known to the world at large, the events that led to their recent near extinction might well begin again, and this time they might not be so lucky. Once things were different — the Ceilican were famous bards and troubadours whose free spirits and quick wits were prized by nations around the world. Ever the talented artists, the Ceilican were beloved by the faerie folk, who invited the cats to their revels and showered them with gifts. It is also said that the first Ceilican interbred with the Fair Folk, creating ties of blood that persist to this very day; most of these cats are more likely to have friends among their modern fae cousins, the changelings, than among their fellow Bastet. Not that they limit themselves to such company, of course — the Ceilican are passionate to the extreme, full of wanderlust, and tying them down to anyone or anything for long is a high impossible task. If curiosity really does kill the cat, then chances are the first casualty is a Ceilican.

It is precisely this wild and volatile streak, however, that brought doom down on the tribe in the first place. Scorning the opinions of others, the faerie cats of centuries past would hold revels with the Fair Folk and demons alike. When the horror of the Burning Times began, the Ceilican were caught largely unaware by the fury of the witch-hunters. Perhaps the most horrific fact, however, is that early on in the time of persecution, a Ceilican (whose name is mercifully lost to history) broke under torture and actually let slip the tribe's Yava to his or her inquisitors. Armed with this knowledge, the witch-hunters and some of their supernatural allies decimated the faerie cats, for the Ceilican had no defense against those with such powerful knowledge. Like the Bubasti before them, it was assumed that the Ceilican fell to extinction during those terrible times, but in truth a few survivors managed to escape the continent and hide themselves among the populations they found in exile. Thus they exist to this day, wandering here and there as suits their whim, careful not to arouse suspicion lest other Bastet catch on to them.

This lifestyle has exacerbated their already capricious manner — most faerie cats constantly adopt different names, faces, identities, even new Pryios



or Natures as suits their needs. This makes them hard to get along with after a while, but the Ceilican consider such losses small in comparison to what they have to lose should they be discovered again. Their Yava are still widely known in Bastet circles — usually learned as part of a cautionary tale of why kits should choose death over spilling their tribe's secrets — and could easily be used to start the persecution all over again. So for now they hide among their fellow cats, doing their best to keep their traditions alive and try to reclaim the glory that was once theirs.

Tribal Home: Nearly all Ceilicans live in America; some occasionally travel back to Europe, but few stay for long — there are too many old enemies there, and the risk of exposure is too great.

Culture and Kinfolk: Most Ceilican adopt a "Enter in laughter, leave in tears and always keep 'em guessing" philosophy that, while charming for a time, tends to leave a string of broken hearts and confused friends behind them. Ceilican always send out clues as to their new identity, however, and the dedicated souls who manage to track them down are considered friends for life and held close to the faerie cat's heart. What's more, the Ceilican have retained their passion for life and are drawn to lifestyles that allow them to be near those they find exciting: artists, gangsters, wizards and others. Ardent romantics, many Ceilican live by mock-archaic codes of honor and woo their favorites with legendary enthusiasm; since they know most such romances are doomed by their wandering ways, they make up for it with that much more intensity. The only thing the faerie cats are deadly serious about is keeping the tribe's presence secret; those who would betray their existence to outsiders, even fellow Ceilican, are punished swiftly and without mercy. This tribe is hanging on by a thread as it is, and no one wants to hand their persecutors the scissors once again.

Organization: Ceilican are solitary, like most Bastet, but once a year the tribe gathers on the Scottish moors for a wild celebration. If any outsiders have seen this rite, none have lived to tell about it. The Ceilican also communicate through a code known as the Silent Way, which consists of hidden messages worked into the lyrics and chord structures of demo tapes or concerts; the Ceilican are always tickled when such songs get airplay, especially if they happen to be a joke or insult directed at another tribe.

At least once a year, the Ceilican must take a new name, shift her personality, change her looks and adopt a new lifestyle. She may return to her previous life eventually but cannot settle into any one life for long. The faerie cat retains the memories of her previous life, but they appear dreamy and distant, like a movie she once saw rather than something she actually experienced.

Secrets Sought: Ceilican love all manner of gossip, personal anecdotes, folktales, eyewitness accounts and any so-called "urban legends" they can get their paws on. Personal secrets fascinate them, and capable conversationalists can keep a Ceilican spellbound for hours.



Appearance: Most Ceilican resemble domestic house cats, although they are quite large (about the size of a small panther) and display a correspondingly wide range of markings. Over time the tribe has also bred with panthers, leopards, lynxes and other cats; it's how they've been able to blend and disappear so well. Most Ceilican pass themselves off as Bagheera, Qualmi or Pumonca, and they tend to have enough of those genes to go without questioning, especially in the solitary society of the Bastet.

Initial Willpower: Two

Initial Rage: Two

Yava

Due to their tribal ties, Ceilican suffer aggravated damage from objects made of cold iron (not steel or other alloys). The fourth Yava came into being recently, and is unknown outside the tribe. The other secrets rest in troves of certain faerie folk and witch-hunting groups for the day they might come in handy again.

- The faerie cats fear the touch of cold iron. It burns them like a brand.
- Reciting a Ceilican's name backward three times causes him discomfort; recite it six times thus, and he will die.
- The sound of a silver bell or church hymn strikes a faerie cat deaf for three days after.
- The race's passion undoes them. Each year, they must forget who they are and become someone else. Some cats must do this often, and by their landless ways, you shall know them.

Tribe Gifts: *Banish Burning, Laughing Last, Satyr's Wisdom*

Outlook: In many ways the Ceilican are still the wild, carefree spirits they once were, but the horror of the Burning Times and the subsequent secret existence has taken its toll on them. As making lasting friends and relationships is difficult, they tend to take few things very seriously, but those causes and people they do consider important are protected with as much intensity as the cat can muster. Where other Bastet are concerned, they tend to associate with those breeds they are closest to, and since most Ceilican make it a point not to attract attention, they keep their opinions of the others to themselves. The faerie cats generally get along poorly with the Balam, however, as they see them racing to extinction out of stubborn pride. Many Ceilican also hold a marked distrust for the Simba and even the Khan; they've been on the wrong side of violence too long to easily follow those who wield it.

Khan

The Simba may rage and roar about how the other tribes owe them respect, but in the minds of most Bastet, it is the Khan who actually *earn* the respect the lions merely demand. Khan are a curious mix — honorable warriors who turn up their noses at the unsavory spying activities of their fellow cats one moment



and lick the blood of a dozen enemies off their claws in the next. Legend holds that they were put on the earth to fight demons, and regardless of the actual truth, the Khan are certainly among the most accomplished devil-fighters and Asura hunters in the world. In fact, the current perilous state of their breed might well be because the Khan are *too* good at their appointed mission — they made too many of the wrong type of enemies, and now they're paying the price for such dedication. To their credit, it is a price the Khan gladly pay, and their fury against the minions of Cahlash has not abated one bit, though it endangers their lives and souls — if such is the cost of serving the will of Heaven, the tigers claim, then so shall it be served!

Of course, things were not always thus. In earlier times, the Khan wandered throughout Asia, learning the wisdom of the sages even as they studied the arts of war and weeded out the corruption they found. Indeed, the greatest heroes of tribal legend are noble scholar-warriors who could quote Buddhist philosophy as they turned back the forces of darkness, and modern Khan strive to uphold such ideals, balancing the strength of the body with the agility of the mind. Not all is fighting and reading, however; while they can seldom stand each other's company for very long, the Khan love to have guests and devote themselves to their friends with the same intensity they use to hunt demons. (After all, if a tiger invited *you* over for dinner, would you say no?) The tigers learned to command the very elements themselves, and for centuries they served as the first line of defense for countless villages against all manner of night creatures, from Asura and Banes to corrupt rulers and even Western Garou. Often outnumbered, the Khan learned to make themselves more than capable of dealing with most threats on their own; those opponents whose powers or crimes warranted additional support quickly found themselves facing a group of vengeful tigers. While such war parties were often short-lived alliances, they almost always outlived their intended target!

In modern times, the Khan have been reduced to but a handful, with little more than 20 of their kind left; a series of disastrous conflicts with minions of Cahlash, depraved Kindred foes and even fellow tigers have left their ranks in tatters. During the last conflict, knowledge of the Sun Sleep Yava was employed to wreck havoc on them, and the Khan will go to extreme lengths to ensure that such a massacre is never repeated. The loss of their feline Kinfolk, threatened by extinction themselves, greatly saddens the tribe, and they are leading efforts to protect their cousins — those who harm the wild tigers or threaten their lands are dealt with as swiftly as possible. While they do not enjoy the same unified tribal structure they once did, the Khan are determined to uphold their original mission regardless.

Tribal Home: Although they originated in India, the Khan have since spread all over Asia and even beyond; the decimation of their own ranks and those of their wild Kin has led them to abandon their ancestral hunting grounds for a time in search of safer lands. This pains the brave tigers deeply, and they eagerly look forward to the day when they can reclaim their old lands again.



Culture and Kinfolk: Khan have lived and bred with the noblest and strongest families of the lands they inhabit. While the recent losses among the tribe have put a strain on some of these relations, most Khan still boast impressive pedigrees. Naturally, their Kinfolk still tend to be well connected and politically important, and so are able to enjoy the best physical training and educational resources during youth. Raised in cultures that value honor and obedience, the Khan place great importance in those qualities — they are what makes them the true Swords of Heaven instead of more mindless monsters raging at the dark. Younger Khan tend to wander, driving out corruption where they find it, but older Khan often set up a protectorate where they can defend a family or land they find important.

Organization: Once the Khan enjoyed a complex hierarchy of rulers, but the betrayal of their last sultan toppled what was already a weakening structure at the time. Now each Khan declares his own territory and makes the rules within.

Secrets Sought: An honorable folk, the Khan prefer to gather lore about forgotten cities, remote enclaves and the day-to-day life of the places they live in.

Appearance: Most Khan are of the familiar Bengal tiger breed and carry its distinctive coloration and markings; few other patterns in the animal kingdom are as familiar (or as fearsome). Natural white tigers are exceedingly rare, so they are accorded great respect, although they must live up to equally great expectations.

Initial Willpower: One

Initial Rage: Three

Yava

- The Khan belong to the people of the sun; when he sleeps, they sleep also. During an eclipse, all Khan slumber for one day, then awaken hungry.
- Khan cannot resist the meat of an innocent child, though it violates their laws to eat it.
- A tiger cannot resist a direct challenge. To turn away costs him his rage for a fortnight.

Tribe Gifts: *Rhino's Favor, Ricepaper Walk, Skin of Jade*

Outlook: The Khan are the embodiment of an ancient contradiction: noble warriors, possessed of great rage and savagery but tempered by equal amounts of discipline and learning. They respect those tribes that seem to understand their honest ways; the Pumonca in particular have won their admiration, as have the Balam, whose struggles seem all too familiar to the tigers. They dislike but tolerate the clever wordplay of the Qualmi and the Bagheera, but the Bubasti go too far with their quest for hidden lore, and the Khan would dearly love an excuse to smash the shadowcats. They are fairly indifferent to the other tribes, except for the Simba, who seem to burn with jealousy over the respect the Khan get from their fellow Bastet. For their part, the Khan want no part of the feud — they have no desire to claim the throne



of catkind, empty prize that it is — but if the Simba want a fight, then the Khan will certainly give it to them.

Pumonca

Like the lands they call home, the Pumonca are a diverse, rugged lot, but one thing the so-called Storm Walkers have in common is a deep love of the wild, as well as a sacred drive to protect it. While the passing years have seen a change in the composition of the tribe as new races came to call it home, throughout it all the Pumonca have remained changeless in purpose, still faithful to the charge that the great spirit Thunderbird gave them long ago. He ordered them to preserve the purity of the land and to punish the wicked beings who sought to do it harm, and though it has cost them dearly over the years, the Pumonca uphold this mission gladly. To this day, even those Pumonca who follow a different Jamak still revere Thunderbird and his ideals of purity, honor and strength.

This tribe lived a lifestyle largely unchanged by time for many centuries, watching over Native American villages as a kind of bogeyman; Pumonca would come in the night to punish the foolish and the wicked, while villages who honored the sacred ways would receive fair weather and good harvests. Pumonca allied with the Pure Ones of the Garou, joining Wendigo war parties and Uktena vision quests with equal ease. All of this changed when the Wyrmscomers arrived, bringing with them the European Garou eager to prove their dominance. When the new War of Rage erupted, the Pumonca fought side by side with their allies and suffered many losses, but their strength (and even more fearsomely, their stealth) earned them a reputation as terrifying foes. After the war ended with the defeat of the Storm Eater and the truce of the Garou factions, the Pumonca — never plentiful to begin with — were staggering toward extinction, and might well have fallen into oblivion if not for a wily elder known as Old Stone Face.

A powerful shaman whose spirit pacts helped even the odds during the war, Old Stone Face saw where the tribe was heading and called all the remaining cougars together in a grand council. He urged peace and renewal, and while he recognized the harm the whites had done, he had seen that there were virtuous folk among them as well and urged the Pumonca to choose the best such people they could find. It was a monumental effort on the part of the solitary cougars, but it paid off in the end, bringing an infusion of new blood into the tribe and returning their numbers to solid if not abundant levels. Now the descendants of these brave survivors seek to honor their ancestors the best way they can — by preserving the land they fought so hard to defend. The trail is long and the way is lonely, but that's just the way the Pumonca like it.

Tribal Home: All Pumonca call North America home. While members may occasionally travel to other lands in pursuit of various quests, such sorties are invariably brief — in many ways, the cougars are as much a part of their land as the rocks and trees they defend.



Culture and Kinfolk: Once all Pumonca were born from exclusively Native American stock, but thanks to the efforts of Old Stone Face and the changing climate of the land, Pumonca of all races can be found wandering the trails. Most Pumonca and their Kinfolk live deep in the wilderness, where they can be close to the lands they love. While some may live in the city from time to time, few ever choose to stay there for good. Stoic, strong and self-reliant like their Bastet cousins, most Kinfolk tend to be found in professions where they can be alone in the wilds most of the time: forest ranger, hunter or hiking guide, for instance. While their feline stock has suffered a decline in the past two centuries, those that remain have become remarkably tough and adaptable.

Organization: Other Bastet often make a show of claiming they answer to no order, but in reality most obey some secret hierarchy within the tribe. Not so with the Pumonca. As soon as a kit is ready to be released, both student and teacher turn and walk away from each other for a full day. Pumonca are loners both by nature and by choice, and it would take a truly spectacular boon (or disaster) to unite them again.

Secrets Sought: Werecougars sniff out the secrets of the land itself, the ways of the native people, and any information they can find on the corrupters who would poison both. They put great faith in spirit-speaking but have no love of magic and consider those who use it to be dangerous.

Appearance: Pumonca tend to be lithe and wiry, with dusty yellow or black fur and white markings. Their jaws are small but powerful, and in any form their feet are thick and strong, a legacy of the countless miles they walk in their lives.

Initial Willpower: Two

Initial Rage: Two

Yava


- A Pumonca is one with her land; if she leaves it for more than a full lunar cycle, she will die.

- The essence of the poisoned land (toxic waste, radiation, sewage) is deadly to a puma. Immerse him in its toxins and he will quickly perish.

- All beasts fear the puma. No horse will bear him, no dog will follow him. The great cats are his Kin and they befriend him, but no other animal can approach without terror.

Tribe Gifts: *Mockingbird's Mirror, Stonework, Wanderer's Boon*

Outlook: Pumonca have their mission, know their land, and trust themselves to do the job the best they can or die trying — anything else is gravy. This doesn't mean they don't make friends or stop in one place from time to time. To the Pumonca, at least, those things aren't as necessary as they are for most folks. When it comes to other Bastet, the Pumonca tend to reserve their judgment on an individual basis, but there are a few exceptions. They like the Qualmi and share many family ties with them, though the lynxes' love of wordplay irritates the taciturn cougars; likewise, they empathize with the Balam and help them out when they can. As a rule, they distrust the Bubasti and refuse to associate with them — magic and darkness are both areas the



cougars would rather avoid. They also despise the Simba for their efforts to force them all together under one banner, and if there's any bad blood in the laconic Pumonca, it's with this tribe.

Qualmi

If most Bastet seem inscrutable to outsiders, then the Qualmi are truly impossible to decipher; riddlers and puzzle masters, the clever lynxes take great delight in testing the wits of those around them and imparting wisdom through ingenious wordplay. Closely tied to the animal kingdom, the Qualmi are master shapeshifters as well — after all, seeing things from a different perspective is much easier when one has a different pair of eyes! This is not to say that the lynxes do nothing but spend their days crafting cunning enigmas, however; Bastet legends speak of the Qualmi as powerful sorcerers and shamans who hide a potent command of the elements behind their friendly smiles and tricky phrases. There are many tales of wicked folk disappearing in the cold arctic nights, dragged off by savage beasts, and more than one story begins with a lynx posing a riddle to her target and devouring the unfortunate if they couldn't come up with the right answer. Of course, given their affinity for deception and misdirection, this fearsome reputation could be just another ploy on the part of the Qualmi, but facing such knowing smiles and dancing eyes, most foes decide they're better off not taking the risk.

Secluded as they are, Qualmi have learned to enjoy the company of animals, and often have a network of "informants" that goes undetected by less subtle folk. Qualmi also have no trouble dealing with wolves, unlike the majority of other Bastet; their friendship with the Uktena tribe stretches back beyond memory, and while the Wendigo find them too pacifistic as a rule, they will help each other should the need arise. They are also longtime allies of the prankster Nuwisha, sharing the coyote's sense of humor and their idea of teaching through trickery, and many Qualmi know a Corax or two as well — the ravens tend to pick up the neatest little scraps of puzzles in their travels, and the Qualmi love helping them piece the larger whole together. Indeed, this love extends to other areas as well — Qualmi "history" in particular is a hopeless mix of tall tales, fantastic myths and other anecdotes, few of them with any idea of chronological order or other overall structure. This has proved very frustrating to the Bastet who wish to put together a tidy history of their people, but the Qualmi simply shrug in response; if the others aren't clever enough to figure it out, then that's their problem!

Tribal Home: Qualmi are creatures of the colder climes, and most of them can be found in the northern reaches of America and Canada. Most build small shelters in the wilderness and spend their days there; while traveling lynxes are not unheard of, they are definitely the exception.

Culture and Kinfolk: Qualmi life revolves around the concept of hospitality; visitors are treated with great courtesy and generosity, and those in need may find themselves sheltered by a caring Qualmi host for a month



or more. Of course, there's a price for such consideration — guests are treated to a generous helping of seemingly nonsensical questions, given equally bizarre replies to their own inquiries, and must endure long periods of total silence. Those who are too slow to catch on are shown the door as fast as possible, while the quick-witted are shown even greater warmth and invited to remain for up to a year. Qualmi are vigorous folk who enjoy the outdoor life and tend to be very self-sufficient. Most of their Kinfolk share this love of living with nature and can be found in small towns throughout the north. Lynxes tend not to mate for life, however; children are given over to trusted friends for raising, and unless the Changing Breed shows up, the child may never know who her real parents were.

Organization: Qualmi only meet when taking a younger lynx for fostering; fellow lynxes tend to make each other nervous, and most First Years really only last about six months before master and student part company. When a Qualmi attends a taghairm, it is usually more out of courtesy or curiosity than anything else; while they do not scorn the presence of other Bastet, they usually sense that other cats find their company at least mildly aggravating and figure they have better things to do than spend a night dodging the claws of one of their more slow-witted cousins.

Secrets Sought: Riddles are of obvious interest to these cats, but they also enjoy gathering bits of elemental lore and native culture. Modern mass media seems to hold a kind of eerie sway over them as well, and many Qualmi have televisions in their wilderness retreats, which somehow manage to get excellent reception without cable access... or without power, for that matter.

Appearance: Among the smallest of catkind, Qualmi are typically short and graceful, with thick fur, large ears and wide feet; as the seasons turn, their fur (often spotted but occasionally striped) turns from white to dirty gray to yellow-white or brown.

Initial Willpower: Three

Initial Rage: One

Yava

- The power of a lynx lies in her riddles; to unravel them is to undo her magic (see "Gifts" on page 169).
- The Qualmi share a soul with the salmon; poison the salmon, and you harm the tribe.
- No lynx can speak the truth about her parents. Confront her with their names and faces, and she will be confused for days.

Tribe Gifts: *Breakfast of Stones, No Hidden Thing, Turned Fur*

Outlook: Not surprisingly, Qualmi have a very paradoxical outlook on life and their fellow Bastet; most lynxes loathe lies and hypocrisy, yet they also recognize that the major trade of catkind lies in secrets and deception. Likewise, they wish their cousins well and offer nothing but good counsel to them, but since few other Bastet take the time to figure out what the Qualmi are really saying, such good intentions seldom amount to much. This leaves



the tribe conflicted — they are unwilling to abandon their riddling in order to converse with their fellow Bastet, but at the same time they know that much is lost due to this lack of communication. Finding a way to bridge this twisted gap is the goal of many Qualmi in these dark times. While the answer may not come easily, lynxes are nothing if not patient.

Simba

Lion. King of the Beasts. Mightiest of all creatures, lord of the animal kingdom, ruler by roar and claw — ah, would that it were so once more!

To the Simba, the whole modern age is one horrible joke — a world spun out of balance, where they have become the villains of catkind instead of retaining their rightful posts at its head. They call themselves “the Lords of Sunlight,” and most sincerely believe they have a divine right over the rest of their fellow Bastet; the fact that most cats would sooner die than bend their knee at once puzzles and infuriates them. And should they hear the nickname the other cats have given them — “the Dark Kings,” an unflattering comparison to the Khan — they become enraged. They do not wish to make war on their fellows if they do not have to (even the worst megalomaniacs among the tribe realize the dwindling numbers of catkind are an ominous sign), but by the same token the injustice of this usurpation burns deep in the breast of even the noblest lions; if it takes bloodshed to right such a wrong, then so be it.

According to their own legends, the sorry state of things can be traced back to the failure of the other tribes to live up to their responsibilities. As the Simba tell it, each Bastet tribe was ordained a specific duty by Seline: the Khan to fight, the Bagheera to hunt, the Pumonca to watch and so on. At the top of the hierarchy were the Simba, warrior-kings who coordinated the efforts of the tribes and gave them leadership when times were dark. For a long time, things were balanced and in harmony, but then a great disaster befell all of catkind, and the other tribes slunk away in disgrace; some even had the temerity to blame the lions for failing to prevent the calamity, and soon all the tribes followed suit and refused to respect their lords. Even some of their own tribe turned away in shame, melding with (or becoming — no one’s really sure) the Ceilican, while another branch retreated into the bush lands of Africa, where they remain to this day. Those Simba who remained were left with a kingdom in tatters, and could do little but enforce the Impergium and try to rebuild their empire one piece at a time. Most Simba still refuse to speak of those days, when the white invaders came to their lands and slaughtered their feline Kinfolk by the hundreds, and become angered if it is mentioned.

Now times are changing once more, although not in the way elder Simba would have preferred. A mighty Simba king named Black Tooth rose to power several years ago by force of claw and sheer dark charisma; this giant warrior and his equally fearsome pride, the Endless Storm, now ravage Africa, striking fear wherever they go and forcing those Bastet they encounter to serve them



or die. The Bagheera have fought him and lost; the Swara simply flee. The Bubasti have managed to keep him from Egypt, but rumors speak of dark bargains made in return. Perhaps the worst sufferers at his hands are the Ajaba, hyena's children — using dark sorcery and the aid of nefarious vampire allies, Black Tooth and his pride nearly wiped out the entire tribe, and the survivors of that massacre live a desperate existence on the run from his minions. These days the entire Simba tribe struggles under the shadow of Black Tooth's wicked rule; many younger lions look up to him as a symbol of power and the ability of the tribe to reclaim its place at the head of Bastet society, but the more noble among them cannot help but see him as a sign of darker things to come, and await a hero bold and strong enough to depose this evil king once and for all....

Tribal Home: The Simba have their roots in Africa, and most remain there still, but they are not exclusive to that area — they have spread as far as Ireland and India, and the triangle trade landed several Simba in the Americas as well. Those born outside of the tribal homeland tend to be much less arrogant and domineering than their counterparts, but it will be a bright day in the Abyss when a lion doesn't walk with pride!

Culture and Kinfolk: For all their talk of bloodshed and power, werelions absolutely cherish their loved ones and watch over them closely — anyone who dares to threaten a Simba's family or otherwise drag them into a dispute will face rage without measure. Still, life is nothing without strength, and growing up in a pride brings a constant series of tests, both mental and physical; those who cannot compete are driven out. Rites of passage are especially sacred, and most Simba receive ritual scars or tattoos as they advance in age, especially the males. Those of the Amadu'o family line — the dominant branch of the Simba today — are particularly aggressive, and most don't hesitate to pick a fight if given the chance. The Mayi'o of the Kalahari bush tribes are much less prone to violence, preferring negotiation and tolerance, but if those tactics fail they are more than capable of demonstrating their leonine heritage to those unfortunate enough to have pushed them. Perhaps most important of all, Simba are legendary at holding grudges — the entire tribe is still nursing wounds from times long past, and individual werelions often settle disputes with battles to the death. It's a bad idea to cross a lion, and few ever make the mistake twice.

Organization: Each pride has one Mtolu ("father"), or dominant male, and several Kirii ("wives") and Anwana ("young hunters"). Small prides defer to larger ones and may owe allegiance to a Chakuva ("high king") like Black Tooth. Some lions wander on their own, starting their own prides or even simply operating solo as suits their disposition. Most Simba avoid the cities, but some renegade lions settle there, especially younger ones looking to make their own mark.

Secrets Sought: Lions have only one interest in mind — whatever will help them assume a position of power, be it physical, mystical or political. To



this end, they will gladly seek out all manner of secrets and are utterly without shame or pity when it comes to using them to get what they want. Those tribe members not completely obsessed with improving their own station still tend to exhibit a certain moral flexibility when it comes to dealing in secrets and often surprise their fellow Bastet with the nasty dirt they have on others, even if they never actually use it.

Appearance: Whether the other tribes like it or not, there is something innately commanding about the Simba: their feline forms are large and powerful without being brutish, and their rich golden fur burns with the colors of summer sunlight. Even in human form, most lions treasure their hair as a sign of strength, letting it grow long and wild.

Initial Willpower: One

Initial Rage: Three

Yava

- A rope made of a lion's mane will bind a Simba fast.
- To defeat a lion, steal his roar. In it, you may find a bit of his soul. He will not harm the one who holds that soul until he finds his roar again.
- No male Simba will kill his wife, or allow another to do the same.

Tribe Gifts: *Armor of Kings, Majesty, Submit*

Outlook: Most Simba would be perfectly at home in the high-pressure, backstabbing environment of a Shadow Lord court, and even the less aggressive types within the tribe are constantly evaluating their place in the social scene they're part of; being second best is never good enough. Aware of the dislike and distrust the other tribes bear for them, most Simba adopt one of two attitudes: either they try to convince others of their good intentions and lead by example, or they attempt to cow others into submission with brute force and intimidation. Most hate the Khan for earning the respect of the other tribes and will go out of their way to pick fights with the tigers and otherwise harass them. All other tribes are beneath their notice, unless they offer a sufficient reason to think otherwise. Simba also dislike technology, which respects neither force nor personality. They prefer to rely on their natural talents and their Gifts to survive. Those who do the same earn their respect, but such beings are rare indeed in this technological age.

Swara

Few understand the elusive Swara; among their fellow Bastet, the cheetahs are often dismissed as paranoid cowards, fast runners who use that ability to full advantage whenever trouble rears its head. And in fact there is some truth to these legends, though not in the sense that most Bastet suppose — the werecheetahs do indeed spend much of their time away from the bustle of the mortal world, but that is because they alone among all catkind share a special gift — a natural ability to walk between worlds. Thanks to this talent, the Swara have learned nearly as much about the spirit realms as the Garou

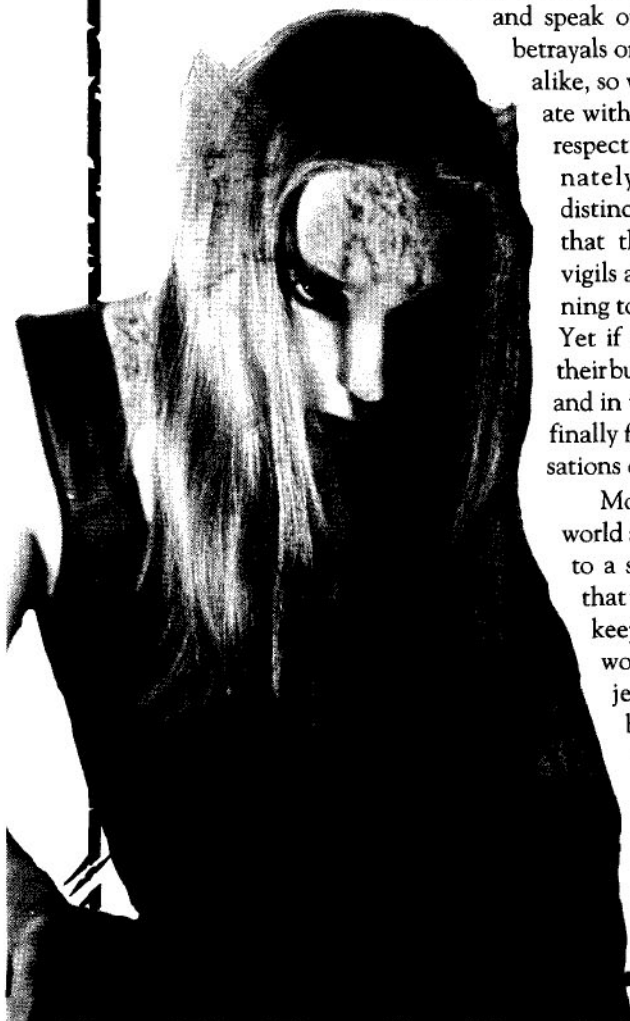


themselves, and they use this knowledge to uphold the mission they received from Seline — to defend the sacred places from those forces that would corrupt and defile them. In return the Swara adore Seline and her Lunes, and refer to themselves as “the Silver Folk” in her honor. Many caerns and glens throughout their native Africa owe their existence to a vigilant Swara guardian, and while the work is largely thankless, the cheetahs handle it with grace and even humor. As their migratory ways have carried them beyond the shores of their home continent, some Swara choose to defend holy sites in other lands, although such efforts run afoul of other supernatural creatures as the places of power fade and the struggle for mystic energy increases.

It is precisely this trend that haunts the Swara's nights — all around them they see the signs of the End Times, and while the cheetahs are not an overly gloomy tribe, most of them see their efforts as the last gasp of a dying world and are simply resigned to their fate. Too often betrayed and attacked by others in the course of their duties, many Swara are quite paranoid, and few of them make any lasting relationships outside of the tribe and their animal companions. Tribal legends reinforce this old prejudice,

and speak of lurid massacres and heartless betrayals on the part of humans and Bastet alike, so when a Swara chooses to associate with an outsider, it is a sign of great respect and trust on her part. Unfortunately, few indeed earn such a distinction in these dark days, meaning that the Swara must continue their vigils alone, relying on speed and cunning to defeat the enemies of the land. Yet if any Swara have complained of their burden, it has yet to become known, and in this trait the cheetahs may have finally found an answer to the old accusations of cowardice.

Most young Swara in the modern world are wanderers, not yet dedicated to a sacred site, searching for places that need their protection. They must keep their gift for walking the spirit world from the other tribes, whose jealousy would quickly undo them, but at the same time it is precisely this talent that makes them so useful. Life quickly becomes a balancing act for the young cheetah, who must uphold her duty as best she can without





letting the others realize exactly who helped them or how it was done. Fortunately, it is a challenge that most cheetahs are more than capable of meeting.

Tribal Home: Most Swara begin and end their lives on the grasslands of Africa, but during the course of their lives they may travel the length of the world, and many do. Settling down is difficult for these paranoid and restless folk, but when they do, they defend their homes with a ferocity that surprises their fellow Bastet.

Culture and Kinfolk: Swara are drawn from all races of the world, though the majority of their tribal culture remains decidedly African. Few cheetahs have much in the way of a home life; even from a young age, they are skittish and suspicious, and this distrust of society tends to set them apart from their peers. Things don't improve much with the fostering, either — kuasha teach their kits the stories of betrayal that have followed the tribe since the earliest days, so distrust becomes second nature. Shy as they are, this tribe favors its feline side much more than most; their human Kinfolk tend to be of any profession that allows them to travel as much as possible: journalists, guides and messengers.

Organization: Swara separate as soon as the fostering is finished; the only other time a cheetah is likely to associate with anyone for long is when they choose a mate, and even then they only stay around as long as it takes to ensure the safety of any children they might have. They can call on their tribe to aid them when they must, but few choose this option except in truly dire emergencies — fast as they are, the cheetahs are too scattered to organize very quickly.

Secrets Sought: Swara are adept at seeking out spirit lore in their efforts to defend the sacred places, and anything that will help them preserve the existing order or fulfill their duties better is fair game as far as they're concerned. Of course, much of what they learn only reinforces their already strong paranoia.

Appearance: Swara are full of nervous energy in any form and tend to stay near the exits wherever they are. Their eyes rove constantly, never seeming to rest on anything for long. In feline form, they are thin and powerful, the fastest land animals in the world. They savor the thrill this offers — often a friend's first glimpse of this tribe's sense of humor comes while watching them try daredevil stunts in feline form, just for the fun of it.

Initial Willpower: Three

Initial Rage: One

Yava

- The Swara are very protective of their mother's good name. By telling tales of Damaa's cowardice, you can reduce a cheetah to madness.
- The soil of the moon intoxicates the Swara. Mix it into his drink, and he will dance and laugh for days.



- The Unmaker has his hand deep in all Bastet's souls. A frenzy will herald his approach. A Swara fears such frenzy, and must avoid its taint at all costs.

Tribe Gifts: *Diamond Claws, Impala's Flight, Weight of a Heart*

Outlook: It's important to remember that if the Swara distrust and paranoia hasn't been fully driven into them by the time they come of age, then their *kuasha* will do their damndest to make sure it is — this viewpoint is absolutely critical to playing a Swara correctly. They do not have these traits to the point of madness (at least not most of them), but they can never really lose them either; most Swara enter all their relationships expecting to be betrayed in the end, like it or not. When that doesn't happen, they are still slow to extend true friendship, and quick to bolt at a sign of trouble. This tends to make them maddening companions, but those who manage to wait out this long period of suspicion find them gentle and sensitive (especially for changers), with a wide streak of humor in their nature in addition to their strong sense of duty. The only exceptions to this rule are Garou and Simba — Swara will almost never given either of these races the time of day, and most simply flee at their approach. They do make exceptions, of course, but those are rare in the extreme, and other Swara will treat such individuals with great suspicion regardless.

Breeds

Like their fellow Changing Breeds, the stock a Bastet springs from explains a great deal of her attitudes and experience, and often dictates her reaction to the First Change as well. There are three breeds: homid, metis and feline. A Bastet's breed is determined by the breed of the mother (with the obvious exception of metis).

Homid

Most Bastet born these days are of the homid breed, and small wonder: many of the great cats are being pushed dangerously close to extinction, so the breeding stock has become limited. This is not to say that homid Bastet are a poor second choice. Many ancient societies considered it a high honor to mate with the fierce cat-warriors, and some secret orders keep the tradition alive still, watching over these "children of the gods" as they grow into their true birthrights. As their instinctive grasp of the human world combines with their newfound feline aptitudes and Gifts, they have the potential to inflict more harm on the enemies of the Folk than any other breed. Let the others sniff about a loss of connection to the wild or other esoteric things; times have changed, and if saving the world means adopting human methods and strategies, then that's what shall be done. Homid Bastet don't apologize for the accident of their birth, and those who make too many monkey jokes or liken them to the mortals ravaging Gaia once too often soon find themselves on the sharp end of a Hanshii challenge.



All the same, more than a few homids feel like outcasts, even among their fellow Folk; their First Change destroyed the old social ties they had among any "normal" humans they grew up with, and many of their feline cousins treat them as sense-blind kits who have to be led around by the nose everywhere. Of course, given the disposition of most Bastet, this only drives them that much harder to win the respect of their fellow cats.

Natural Form: Human

Beginning Gifts: *Cat Claws, Eavesdropper's Ear, Sweet Hunter's Smile*

Initial Gnosis: Two

Metis

While they don't suffer under the same deep prejudices as their Garou counterparts do, those Bastet born of the forbidden union of two of their kind still feel the sting of disapproval every day of their lives: Each metis bears a deformity of some kind, most of the body, a few of the mind, to testify to the illicit nature of their creation. There are few enough werecats as it is, so no one will say anything to them directly, but most metis know that the other werecats gossip behind their backs. They talk about the nightmare birth they put their mothers through, the shame of living with such a deformity and the touch of unnaturalness that causes normal cats and humans alike to cringe at the approach of a metis.

Despite all their drawbacks, some metis have one great advantage over their fellow werecats: since their natural shape is the monstrous Crinos, most metis are raised by one of the Folk, and so have learned the ways and traditions of the Bastet from before they learned to walk. This gives them something of an edge when it comes to dealing with Bastet history and laws, and more than one kit has been guided through her First Year by a wise old metis kuasha. The Moon Mother, guilty that her ancient ban resulted in their deformity, has shown them her sympathy as well, and metis cats enjoy a deep link with creation, allowing them to perform powerful magic in the name of Seline. Of course, if it happens that a metis is raised by cats or humans as one of their own, he is in for a real shock when his First Change comes, if he doesn't know who his true parents were....

As with their Homid relatives, metis characters don't apologize for the chance of their birth; after all, no one asked them for their opinion at the time! Instead, they shoulder their burdens and serve the will of Seline as best they can, providing a model of dedication that the proudest homid or fiercest feline would do well to imitate.

Natural Form: Crinos

Beginning Gifts: *Blinding Moonbeam Gaze, Create Element, Sense Primal Nature*

Initial Gnosis: Three



Metis Disfigurements

Although they do not suffer the same social prejudices that their Garou counterparts, all metis Bastet bear some sort of disfigurement. You must choose one from the list below or make up your own and have it approved by a Narrator. All mandatory Negative Traits that come from a disfigurement do not count toward the normal bonuses gained by Negative Traits. In other words, you cannot gain extra Traits simply by choosing to play a metis, but you can add additional Negative Traits to a metis character.

Bad Sense: You must take the Negative Trait *Oblivious* and lose all ties related to either hearing or vision (your choice). You must roleplay your disability. Among the sensitive Bastet, this is considered a serious drawback.

Bent Limb: One or more of your limbs are deformed, twisted at a weird angle or withered and near useless. You cannot take the Physical Trait *Dexterous*, and you must take the Negative Trait *Lame*. If the affected limb is a leg, your movement rate is halved. Regardless, you lose all dexterity-related ties except combat when using that limb. Remember, arms become legs in some forms, so adjust accordingly.

Hairless: Your body hair is mangy, patchy or totally nonexistent. When in Homid form you have the Negative Trait *Sickly*. When in Feline form you gain the Negative Trait *Repugnant*. This is considered especially nasty by the stylish Bastet; what's more, since so many Bastet habits center around grooming, your lack of fur tends to make you upset, and when you get upset, *people die!*

Madness: You are slightly mad, even for the notoriously quirky Bastet. You must either win a Static Mental Test or spend a Willpower Trait whenever you find yourself in a stressful situation. Otherwise, you will have a temporary derangement imposed on you by a Narrator. This lasts for one scene, and such unstable behavior can cause many other Bastet to distrust you.

Mashed Face: Your nose and jaws look almost flat, even in Homid form; not only does this look funny, it makes breathing difficult as well. Your nose and eyes run constantly, and you are down two Traits on all Physical Tests related to endurance or clear breathing.

Misshapen Jaw: Your teeth jut inward, outward, or both at once, which makes it impossible to close your mouth entirely. This puts you one Trait down on all biting attacks, and the drooling and halitosis that accompanies such a condition puts you one Trait down on all Social Challenges.

No Claws: You have no claws, and you do not cause aggravated damage when you strike with your paws. Curiously enough, your bite doesn't cause aggravated damage, either. You may never acquire a Gift which allows extra damage to be done by either tooth or claw, nor will those Gifts which require such natural weaponry be effective either.

Stench: No matter what you do, a heavy odor follows you in all your forms, and even after all these years, even you can't really get used to it. You are down two Traits on all Social Tests except intimidation against those within sniffing distance, and you can expect some pretty unpleasant reactions as well.

Whiskerless: Although it may seem minor at first, this deformity actually affects your sense of spatial relations, skewing your depth perception and robbing you of some of the usual benefits of operating at night. While in Canis, Chatro and Feline forms, you are one Trait down on all actions involving physical dexterity (combat is usually included) and do not receive the usual Bastet bonus in darkness. Finally, you may never learn the Gift *Whisker Sight* and are considered pretty odd-looking by fellow Bastet.



Feline

As the great cats themselves grow ever nearer to extinction, retreating from the advancing hordes of humanity, so too have Bastet of feline ancestry declined, now forming the smallest number of catkind in the world. Life has become a question of conflicting attitudes and actions — felines feel great anger over the decimation of their Kin and the loss of their lands, but survival dictates fleeing the apes instead of fighting them and falling to their guns. These days, many feline Bastet aren't even truly from the wild, born to cats raised on game preserves, in zoos or even in shows. Such werecats face yet another conflict — for their lifetimes humans have fed them, shown them affection and kept their cages clean; on the other hand, a cage is still a cage, and cats who show any sign of temper or territoriality are quickly drugged and subdued. In any event, most feline Bastet have very mixed attitudes about humans, which often displays itself first in suspicious silence, followed by either intense dislike or an abundance of affection. Of course, as soon as the First Change arrives, the tables are turned a bit....

As with their lupine cousins, playing a feline character well involves remembering certain basic feline traits and mannerisms that set them apart from their fellow Folk. Many felines are nocturnal, for example, which means they are sleepy and sluggish during the day. While Bastet can eventually learn to savor other foods, most felines are enthusiastically carnivorous, and enjoy their meat bloody and freshly killed. Their senses are extremely keen, and they tend to trust and follow them more readily than most; in addition, they think in images, not concepts, and thus tend to have a very different way of approaching problems than humans do. Felines tend to exhibit many emotions with body postures, touching and subtle variations in vocal tone, and often grow frustrated trying to "talk down" to those who don't recognize such behavior.

Most great cats are solitary or at most live in small family groups; some breeds have pairs that mate for life, while others stay together only long enough to raise a litter and then part once more. Most feline Bastet will seek to establish a similar small, tightly knit group rather than trying to become close to a wide variety of individuals. Felines are also strictly territorial, and as a mixture of human and feline traits, Bastet often extend these feelings to personal property and even relationships as well, for better or worse — woe betide the individual who attempts to steal *anything*, be it a car or a confidant, from a feline werecat!

As with most things concerning the Bastet, general rules can only carry so far, and what holds for one breed may be exactly opposite in another. Players are encouraged to look into their characters' breed to get a better grasp of their unique behavior and habits; even a quick glance at an encyclopedia will usually provide a wealth of information that can be turned to interesting roleplaying quirks.

Natural Form: Feline

Beginning Gifts: *Killer's Leap, Kitten's Cry, Mark as Mine*



Initial Gnosis: Four

The Five Forms

Bastet have five forms, much like their Garou cousins, and shifting between them requires the same process and time that it does for the wolves, including shredding any nondedicated clothing the cat might be wearing. The only difference is that a crisis might provoke an out-of-control shift (see "The Price," below).

Crinos Bastet evoke the Delirium in onlookers, much as Garou do, but since most tribes played a small role in the Impergium, the fear is not quite so intense; mortals are treated as if they were two steps higher on the Delirium chart than they would normally be. Great cats *did* once hunt humans for food and sport, however, and a dark corner of the human ancestral memory remembers this — Bastet in the saber-tooth Chatro form evoke a full Delirium response in those who see them. (See *Laws of the Wild* for details on the Delirium.)

Homid

Identical to any normal human, though many Bastet have some slightly feline mannerisms that carry over into their everyday behavior. Many Bastet are slim and lithe of build, with sharp, delicate features, but this is by no means a requirement.

Sokto

A curious yet powerfully seductive mix of human and feline characteristics, the Sokto form is clearly inhuman but remains exotic and appealing nonetheless. As far as changes go, muscles increase and the limbs elongate slightly, while vestigial whiskers grow on the face, and long incisors replace their regular teeth. The Bastet's eyes grow large, with slitted pupils and a slight glow to them, and her hair lengthens and assumes the markings of the cat form. Finally, small claws grow from her fingertips on command, although they are generally ineffective for combat purposes without a Gift of some kind.

Crinos

A mystical synthesis of feline and human traits, the Crinos Bastet is a massive, deadly combination of physical power and cunning intellect. Unlike the war forms of the Garou, however, a Crinos Bastet doesn't strike observers as hulking and savage; rather, it strikes those who look on it as lithe and menacing, a walking threat waiting for a target. Bastet who study the mystical arts seem to give off an aura of magic in this form, and even those of a more straightforward martial bent have a level of subdued mystical strength about them.

Chatro

This huge hunting form evokes the savage power of the prehistoric smilodons and looks like a nightmarish throwback of whatever breed the Bastet belongs to. That is, the basic markings and features are the same, but the entire shape is larger and packed with muscle; most significantly of all, the fangs grow long and razor-sharp, and the jaw slings back to make room for the devastating saber teeth. The entire effect is one of a rampaging killer from the



Bagheera, Balam, Khan, Pumonca and Simba Tribes

Homid: No Trait adjustment.

Sokto: *Ferocious*, *Quick* and *Tough*. Negative Trait: *Bestial*.

Crinos: *Brawny*, *Ferocious* x 2, *Nimble*, *Quick* x 2, *Relentless* x 2 and *Tough* x 2. Negative Traits: *Bestial* x 2 and *Tactless*.

Chatro: *Ferocious* x 2, *Quick* x 2, and *Relentless* x 2. Negative Traits: *Bestial* x 2 and *Shortsighted*.

Feline: *Quick* x 2 and *Tireless* x 2. Negative Trait: *Bestial*.

Bubasti, Ceilican & Qualmi Tribes

Homid: No Trait adjustment.

Sokto: *Quick*, *Alluring* and *Observant*. Negative Trait: *Bestial*.

Crinos: *Nimble*, *Quick* x 2, *Tough* and *Wiry*. Negative Traits: *Bestial* x 2 and *Tactless*.

Chatro: *Alert*, *Ferocious*, *Lithe* and *Quick* x 2. Negative Traits: *Bestial* x 2 and *Shortsighted*.

Feline: *Quick* x 2, *Tireless* and *Wily*. Negative Traits: *Bestial* and *Puny*.

Swara

Homid: No Trait adjustment.

Sokto: *Quick* x 2, *Tireless* and *Wiry*. Negative Trait: *Bestial*.

Crinos: *Ferocious*, *Nimble*, *Quick* x 3, *Relentless* and *Tireless* x 2. Negative Traits: *Bestial* x 2 and *Tactless*.

Chatro: *Ferocious*, *Nimble*, *Quick* x 2, *Relentless* and *Tireless*. Negative Traits: *Bestial* x 2 and *Shortsighted*.

Feline: *Quick* x 3 and *Tireless*. Negative Trait: *Bestial*.

dawn of time, and it's a very potent effect at that. Bastet in Chatro form may immediately make a Simple Test after any successful biting attack; success means they inflict another level of damage from their powerful jaws and ripping teeth. Other characters are advised to keep limbs and children away from the mouths of these relentless hunters.

Feline

As with the werecat's Homid form, the Feline werecat's shape should be obvious. This form gives a measure of anonymity when traveling in the wilderness — though humans and animals alike tend to flee the approach of



a great cat, at least they don't immediately realize it's a supernatural creature. This form doesn't have the combat power of the Crinos or the range of activity possible from the Homid form.

Trait Adjustments for Shapeshifting

Since their physical structures vary widely by breed, it's only natural that different Bastet tribes gain different benefits and drawbacks while shapeshifting. However, in the interests of space and player sanity, the Bastet have been grouped into the following three classes for determining Trait adjustments: the big cats (tigers, lions, leopards, etc.), the smaller cats (lynxes, out-sized housecats, etc.), and the cheetah (who stand alone due to their exceptional speed).

Blessings

The Bastet are unique among the many races that share Gaia's embrace, and as such they are they naturally enjoy a range of birthrights unheard of even among their fellow Changing Breeds. These blessings apply to every form the Bastet assumes; the only exceptions to this rule are their vulnerability to silver and their regenerative powers, neither of which apply to a homid or feline werecat in her breed form (see below).

Like the Garou, Bastet regenerate quickly, resist disease, transform and gain extra fighting ability through Rage, and draw on Gnosis to power their mystical Gifts and rites. (See **Laws of the Wild** for details on these various states and capabilities.) Sadly, the wolves do have one trick up their sleeve that the cats have never been able to master: stepping sideways. This ability is a Gift, not a birthright, and most cats never learn it. They have a few other capabilities that help make up for this lack — a secret even the Bastet (as a whole) cannot master.

Heightened Senses

Given the role of the "Eyes of Gaia" long ago, the Bastet have extremely keen senses, even for shapechangers, and can often sense things well ahead of those around them. In most forms, the Bastet's whiskers allow them to get around by touch, even in absolute darkness. Furthermore, any form can use *padaa*, a combination of taste and smell gained by curling back the upper lip and "tasting" the air as it's breathed in, allowing the Bastet to detect minute scents and tastes at considerable range.

These enhanced senses put the Bastet two Traits up on all perception-related Challenges, including Gifts that rely on direct sensory perception. *Padaa* allows the character act at half the normal penalty in darkness (one Trait instead of two). From the cat's perspective, everything is experienced in a state of alert attention, and most Bastet relish their heightened perceptions as a continual stream of novel sensations.

Common Language

Bastet language (called *Kheuar*, pronounced "kew-arr") is a complex assortment of chirps, meows, howls, cries, snarls and rumbles, as well as an



infinitely more complicated system of sniffs, licks, stares, whisker twitches and body postures. This in part explains why so many Bastet seem mysterious to those around them; a cat may be saying one thing, but another werecat may see he actually means the exact opposite by catching a subtle shift of his companion's whiskers, thus throwing the other party into confusion when the two Bastet "wordlessly" begin the undertaking the contrary task at the same time. This language crosses all cultural and historical barriers, so a Chinese Khan and an American Pumonca can understand each other (if in a limited sense) without trouble. Complicated as it may seem, this language comes quite naturally with a few lessons, though Bastet without any training at all will be unable to understand anything more complicated than the classic "Get outta my way!"

To reflect this, players whose games have multiple Bastet characters should feel free to meet with the other cats and come up with as many hand signals, code phrases, body poses or other "secret messages" as they like, to emphasize the extra dimension of language that other Bastet can grasp when one of their own is speaking. Provided these signals don't confuse the regular order of play (please, don't use Rock-Paper-Scissors or other standard game signs!) or upset the other players *out of character* with all the hidden meanings and double entendres, they can provide an excellent dose of Bastet attitude and mystery as well as creating a rich roleplaying experience for those involved.

The Price

Of course, the blessings of Seline don't come without cost, either: like their Garou cousins, Bastet suffer from the normal negative effects of Rage, berserk and fox frenzies, the Curse and the Delirium. (See **Laws of the Wild** for details on frenzy and the effects of the Delirium and the Curse.) They also suffer from a few uniquely feline drawbacks as well, detailed below. These weaknesses are universal, and apply to all breeds, forms and tribes.

Accidental Shifting

Although many Bastet usually seem quite calm and collected (at least compared to their raging canine cousins), the urges of the predator are never far from the surface, and when angered or upset Bastet are prone to shapeshift accidentally, "jumping forms" to human or feline before they even realize it. Many First Years begin when some stress triggers such a change, though even experienced cats sometimes lose control if they're not careful. In game terms, whenever the character spends a Willpower Trait for reasons other than Gift activation costs, the player must immediately make a Simple Test. Failure (not a tie) means that the Bastet immediately begins changing shape without control, shifting one form per turn. This process usually ends at one end of the spectrum, homid or feline, though sometimes — especially if the cat is facing extreme, immediate stress — the change ends in Crinos, often with disastrous consequences for all those involved. Spending a Mental Trait can stop and



reverse the change, but depending on the circumstances, this is often too little, too late.

At the Narrator's discretion, certain other extremely intense events may trigger a test for jumping forms, such as the betrayal of a close friend, the harming of a loved one, the invasion of a Den-Realm, etc. Such events should be rare and always dramatically appropriate, however, lest the Bastet players begin to wonder if they're playing werecats or just pausing between shapeshifting all the time.


The Yava

At the end of the First Year, the kuasha departs her student's company, but not before teaching one final lesson: Each tribe carries with it three great secrets, known as the Yava. Any one of the three Yava might be true — perhaps all of them are. Regardless, being granted this knowledge is considered the final initiation into full Bastet society, the greatest act of trust and confidence a kuasha can offer to her Tekhmet. These secrets confer ultimate power of members of the tribe and must never be revealed outsiders, no matter how close they may be — to do so is considered a betrayal of one's entire race and is punished accordingly. All the tribes know how horribly the Ceilican and the Ajaba suffered when their Yava became known, and legends still tell of how the Garou treacherously used the secrets against the Bastet during the War of Rage, so between those legends and the dire punishments involved, few ever break this sacred trust.

More fortunately still, for all catkind, Seline decreed long ago that the Yava can only be passed on with the cat's consent; no amount of magic, psychic powers, or other thought-stealing can pry the secrets from a cat who doesn't want to divulge them. (Those who don't like this rule can take it up with Seline herself.) However, as some wicked and cunning hunters have discovered in the past, the Yava may be tortured out of some cats, though the vast majority of Bastet will choose to die before revealing such a closely guarded secret.

In game terms, those who know the Yava of a tribe are two Traits up on attempts to cast magic on those of that particular race; likewise, such cats are two Traits down on any mystical tests against the keeper of such sacred knowledge. This bonus only applies against members of the tribe whose Yava is known — Bubasti secrets won't do any good against a Qualmi. Likewise, regular physical and social contests are unaffected by this bonus. Would-be Yava-stealers beware, however — no matter what advantage is gained from acquiring such knowledge, the tribe in question will mount a large and angry hunt for those who know their secrets, and mystic superiority is rarely a match for a band of angry werecats bent on destruction.

Any kit who is not considered worthy of such important and powerful secrets by the end of his First Year is admonished by his kuasha, then simply left alone; if his kuasha deems him worthy of the responsibility a few months later, she returns and teaches him the Yava. If after a year has passed the kit still does not seem worthy, the kuasha gives up on him and goes her own way,



spreading word to fellow tribe members that he isn't fit to learn the Yava. This is embarrassing for the kit, to say the least, and requires a great deed and a greater act of humility to atone for such disgrace and prove oneself worthy of the Yava after all.

The Three Masks of Catkind: Nature, Demeanor and Pryio

As a wise mortal poet once observed, cats have three distinct aspects to their souls: their public face (the Demeanor), the cat-face they share with the other Folk (the Nature), and the true face they save for themselves (the Pryio). Not that these faces must all be completely different; although rare among the secretive Bastet, some cats are in fact the same deep inside as they seem to be on the surface. In some ways that might be the most clever deception of all, though with the mysterious ways of catkind, who can really say?

Nature and Demeanor are common to all **Mind's Eye Theatre** games; a short refresher list of them has been provided in the character creation summary of this chapter. Those seeking a full description of the various Archetypes and their use in the game should consult **Laws of the Wild**. However, the Pryio is unique to the Bastet, and as such is described further below.

Pryio are sometimes equated to the Garou auspices, computed as they are by the time of day when the Bastet was born. While this does contain some truth, the reality is a bit more complex. To the Bastet, Pryio are viewed as the touch of Seline on the werecat's soul, a gentle nudge to push them in the right direction along their life's journey. As such, they are not the dogmatic social roles the wolves herd their young ones into, but rather a way of looking at things that colors everything the cat does, sometimes subtly, sometimes not. Also, while not terribly common or frequent (except among the unstable cats of the Ceilican), a Bastet may switch Pryio without penalty or fear of disapproval; her friends will certainly notice a change in her behavior, but other than that the majority of the difference lies in the heart of the Bastet herself. Most Bastet, however, are content with one Pryio for most of their lives, and change only on special dates or after important events in their lives dictate such a switch.

As for interpreting Pryio in play, consider by way of example the way Bastet of different Pryio but the same Nature (Bravo) might solve the problem of a mortal gangster running a ruthless protection racket in their neighborhood. A Daylight werecat might confront the thug directly and attempt to defeat him in open combat; a Twilight Bastet might plan an ambush of some kind, strike, then fade back into the shadows; and a Night cat might dangle him over the edge of a rooftop or play a little cat-and-mouse with him until he is... *persuaded* never to return to the city again. The ultimate goal is the same, as is the general strategy employed (physical confrontation); the difference lies in the attitudes of the cats themselves.



Note: At the Storyteller's discretion, Bastet may refresh their Willpower by committing acts in line with their Pryio, just as Willpower can be regained by acting out one's Nature especially well; the conditions for each Pryio are listed below. Storytellers should take care that Bastet are not refreshing their Willpower Traits too easily, however, or the Trait quickly loses its dramatic value.

Daylight

Daylight Bastet are open, friendly and helpful; they dislike deception and complex etiquette, preferring to get straight to the heart of the matter. While their honesty is occasionally a little too direct for some people, just as often they are a breath of fresh air in a cryptic and closed-off world, especially one like the mysterious society of the Bastet. Cats born to Daylight tend to become warriors, protectors, lawgivers and diplomats; they are also known for their ability with children and raise many of the kits born to the Changing Breed. In the wild, these cats hunt for friends, kill trespassers and explore the land. A Bastet aligned to Daylight greets the world with clear vision and an open mind.

— Daylight Bastet might regain Willpower whenever they face a serious challenge head-on and win through courage or good nature.


Twilight

Never satisfied entirely by either darkness or light, these cats prowl the edges of both with an eerie half-sight, questing for the mysticism in all things and constantly evaluating the world from both points of view. They embody passion and contradiction, sometimes withdrawn and reserved, sometimes wild and carefree, and in any event they often play off the best parts of day and night while dodging the drawbacks of both as best they can. A varied and diverse lot, Twilight cats favor such professions as lawyers, romantics, detectives, spies, artists, mystics and many more; about the only rule that applies to all Twilight cats is that no two of them approach anything the same way! Wild cats with this affinity tend to spend a lot of time observing the works of man, or spying on their fellow animals to see what makes them tick.

— Cats born at the edge of Twilight may regain Willpower by uncovering a mystery, decoding a puzzle or creating some complex, expressive work of art.

Night

Bastet of the Night affinity tend to be quite solitary and private, even by Bastet standards, and pursue arcane secrets and forbidden lore with a desire born deep in their souls. These cats are not necessarily sinister or malignant, but even the best of them tend to become angered easily if interrupted in their work, or if they feel their privacy has been compromised. Night werecats treasure occupations that allow them this freedom to work undisturbed, and as such prefer professions such as scholar, assassin, scientist and dark mystic. In the wild, these cats are the hidden stalkers and man-eaters, the fearsome cats whose legends form the basis of campfire stories for years after they strike.



— Those kissed by the Night may regain Willpower from activities that cause others discomfort, reinforce their own privacy or protect some valuable item or secret from outsiders.

Backgrounds

With their unique heritage, Bastet have access to some Backgrounds that the Garou do not. Bastet may not take the Backgrounds *Past Life* or *Totem*, and while they may take *Pure Breed*, it doesn't apply to anyone but fellow Bastet and their Kinfolk. Allowing for those exceptions, Bastet may begin play with any of the Backgrounds presented in **Laws of the Wild**, as well as the following additional Backgrounds.

Den-Realm

Werecats are highly territorial creatures, constantly seeking to define and expand their hunting grounds, and some wise and powerful cats can truly become one with their lands. Such territories are known as Den-Realms, and a Bastet with this Background is fortunate enough to have claimed one of these powerful sanctuaries. Most Den-Realms are typically passed down from teacher to student or friend to friend, although some wicked cats still attempt to rip them from their owner's hands by force. Regardless of the circumstances, until a proper Rite of Claiming is performed, the Den-Realm refuses to recognize the new "owner," so conquering a Realm requires more than just a simple fight. It is important to stress that these territories are extremely rare and valuable, and never trusted to inexperienced kits; only cats of sufficient standing and power (at least of Tilau Rank in almost all cases) are considered worthy of learning the rite and holding a Den-Realm of their own. No elder would bequeath their home to a Tekhmet, after all, and they probably wouldn't lose a fight to one, either.

As to the spiritual nature of the Realm itself, the rite effectively creates a "mini-realm" in the Near Umbra that the Bastet is uniquely bonded to; barring some tremendous attack, the place is safe. The shape of a Den-Realm depends on the owner: a Khan's lands might resemble a bamboo forest or Chinese palace, while a Ceilican's territory might be a faerie stronghold or wild moor. In the strange vistas of the Umbra, such places aren't obvious for what they are — observers must win a Mental Challenge against a difficulty of the Realm's Gauntlet to realize what they're looking at. The Bastet's permission is required to enter a Realm freely, and those foolhardy enough to break into one must make a Gnosis Challenge against the Gauntlet rating — such actions also automatically alert the Bastet to their arrival. Other werecats immediately recognize Den-Realms when they come across them, though they still must gain permission if they wish to cross without incident. Most Bastet don't mind others crossing their territory, however, as long as such visitors pay the proper respect to the host, the land and its inhabitants. Those who fail to do so are eaten.



In game terms, a Bastet gains several other powerful advantages within her Den-Realm: she can step sideways (subject to the normal limitations imposed upon Garou, but no reflective surface is required), she can peek into or out of the Umbra (just like a Garou peeking), she can sense disasters and attacks, and she can "skip" from one point in the Realm to another instantly at a cost of one Gnosis Trait (but only once per scene). Also, a Bastet can always find her Den-Realm, no matter where she might be; and by touch, she can take people with her into the Umbra if she steps sideways (provided the subject is willing).

The number of Traits expended for the Background determines the size of the Den-Realm.

One Trait: A small house.

Two Traits: A large manor.

Three Traits: A full block; about five square miles.

Four Traits: Two square blocks; about 10 square miles.

Five Traits: Five square blocks; about 20 square miles.

Obviously, Storytellers should take care when allowing Den-Realms in their games, much less placing them; if she doesn't wish to have a Bastet skipping merrily in and out of the Umbra, or having to explain to the Garou characters every session why a part of the local Penumbra looks like a maharaja's palace, she should probably make the Bastet's Den-Realm a different location than the normal playing area. That way it can still be visited from time to time, giving the Bastet's player a sense of "home court advantage" and that her Background Traits were well spent without unbalancing the game in the werecat's favor.

Note: Characters may *not* begin play with a Den-Realm of their own, unless given the Storyteller's *explicit* permission to do so; rather, any levels of this Background purchased by beginning characters are considered "on reserve," until the character earns the proper respect and rites to properly claim it. These realms are too rare and too powerful to be given to any Tekhmet for safekeeping, no matter how powerful or promising she might be.

Jamak

Unlike Garou, who run in packs and take totem spirits as patrons for their packs, Bastet are individuals who deal spirits on a one-to-one basis. A Bastet with this Background picks a totem spirit, as usual, but applies it like a personal totem: It works for the Bastet only. Also, since cats are by nature independent, the Bastet and the totem may "part ways" and the player can then trade the levels in this Background to gain a new and different Jamak at a later date (though such an acquisition typically requires the *Jamak Promise Bond* rite to be performed, as well as a suitable quest or other offering to the spirit). Generally, a Jamak is a small, Gaffling-level incarnation of a larger spirit, and so each Jamak has its own personal name, instead of simply being "Coyote" or "Griffin."



Buying a Jamak is otherwise just like purchasing the *Totem* Background, but the player must pay all of the associated points himself. Rarely, a pride of werecats will gather and choose a group totem spirit; such cats fall under the regular *Totem* rules and should be handled accordingly.

Secrets

You have your nose in other people's secrets, and while this can be very dangerous indeed, it's also a source of great pride and respect in Bastet society. For each level of this Background, you receive one secret of some kind from the Storyteller — this secret can be something general, such as which cops are on the take, or something more dangerous, such as the location of the vampire prince's haven or a hidden Garou caern. A secret may not necessarily be true — a wise man once observed that people will believe anything if you whisper it. Of course, once the secret is exposed, you lose that level of this Background (until you learn another secret of comparable value), so many cats hoard their secrets until it's absolutely necessary to use them. The Storyteller may also choose to grant this Background in recognition for especially choice dirt acquired in game.

A Bastet should not take or receive levels of this Background for absolutely every secret he learns — rather, it should be reserved for highly guarded (read: dangerous) knowledge that the Bastet really has no business knowing. Above all, the secrets gained from the Background should always add to the atmosphere of the game — they should be material for plot hooks and dramatic encounters, not a free ride through future encounters or a quick means of blackmailing or ruining other characters. There is no “expend a level, get a clue” feature to this Background — all you have to run with is whatever tidbit you were gifted with at character creation; do your own legwork to learn more.

As it may prove problematic or unbalancing for the character to have such knowledge, this Background may be restricted or even forbidden in certain chronicles, so check with the Storyteller before taking this Background. Finally, this Background may *never* cover the secrets of other player characters; you'll have to dig up those on your own!

Trinket

Bastet tend to pick up curious items, and their long history of mingling with wizards and mystical folk has introduced a number of magical items into their culture. With this Background, your character has discovered something with magical powers. This could be a magical talisman or a spiritual fetish; its full powers and potencies are determined by the Storyteller, as well as any activation costs or other requirements for use. Since Bastet tend to have a number of contacts involved in magics alien to the Garou, it's possible for the object to have some startling powers unknown for most fetishes.

Purchasing a *Trinket* is much like purchasing the *Fetish* Background, but the Storyteller can choose to give the object sorcerous powers or other abilities normally outside the realm of spirits. A Bastet could have a talisman



that enchants people, shoots fire, summons rats — just about anything, subject to Storyteller approval, of course.

Merits and Flaws

These Traits represent certain special talents or frailties that a particular Bastet has, and should be used to create interesting and complex characters, not to min-max a character into an unstoppable killing machine or such. Bastet are free to choose the Merits and Flaws from **Laws of the Wild** with a few exceptions: Bastet may not take any Traits that relate to stepping sideways or the pack mentality, nor may they take any Traits from the Garou Ties category or Traits that recreate Garou tribal Advantages or Drawbacks. If in doubt, consult the Narrator and use common sense about which Traits can be purchased.

In addition, the following Merits and Flaws are unique to the Bastet.

Graceful (2 Trait Aptitude Merit)

You've got an uncanny amount of poise, far beyond what merely the Physical Trait *Graceful* or even the typical werecat norm would indicate (though you should probably possess at least one level of that Trait as well). Few things throw you for long, at least on the surface, and somehow you manage to sail through the worst mistakes with an unshakable "I meant to do that." Even those who hate your guts admit you have style, and some may be positively entranced by your charming presence. You are two Traits up on all tests related to making a good impression or when recovering from a faux pas. This doesn't apply to threats, though such grace can be unsettling in its own way.

Photographic Memory (3 Trait Aptitude Merit)

While not literally photographic, your memory is truly impressive, a handy talent for most Bastet, whose business in spies and secrets makes keeping records a risky proposition at best. You are two Traits up on all tests to recall information, and at any time you may ask a Narrator for information regarding something you wish to recall, though digging up truly old or minute memories may require a Simple Test as well. This Merit does not protect you from supernatural befuddlement, though you will likely become quite suspicious if your attention is called to memories that have been altered or removed, simply because your memory is typically so clear and distinct. This Merit does not supply information you would not have noticed in the first place.

Gift of Seline (5 Trait Supernatural Merit)

Seline has marked you with her favor, and you draw extra power when she is watching over you; any time the moon is full, or that you journey to the Court of Luna itself, you gain a special power:

- You become exceptionally fierce (+2 Rage Traits)
- Seline makes you stronger (+2 Physical Traits)



- You shine with the moon's grace (a free retest on all Social Challenges)
- Her light reveals things to you (two Traits up on all perception-related tests)

- Seline smiles upon your magics (+2 Gnosis Traits)
- Her fullness lends you resolve (an additional Willpower Trait)

These benefits apply only when the moon is full and in the sky; as Seline sleeps during the day, so too do her blessings. Only one gift comes forth at a time, and Seline herself — a.k.a. the Storyteller or Spirit Keeper — decides what blessing it shall be. This favor lasts all night, and disappears with the first rays of morning.

Disconcerting (2 Trait Social Flaw)

No matter what you do, your presence seems to naturally put people on edge, and animals become skittish around you. Even once someone gets to know you better, that subtle sense of weirdness never really departs. You are two Traits down on all tests that involve getting someone to trust or like you, and should adopt a creepy mannerism or two to reflect the social difficulty this Flaw presents. Some such habits include, but are certainly not limited to: staring directly at someone without blinking, even while speaking to them; always referring to other people in the past tense (subtle, yet *very* effective); smiling or laughing softly whenever you hear bad news; and so on. This Flaw is not exclusive to Night or Twilight cats; sometimes the creepiest people are the cheerful ones who never seem to have anything to hide....

Graceless (2 Trait Aptitude Flaw)

The polar opposite of the Merit *Graceful*, you always seem to find the exact wrong thing to say or do, and never seem to make a good impression no matter how hard you try. In fact, the harder you try, the worse things get, which of course makes you more frustrated and determined, and so on. In game terms, you are two Traits down on all tests to make a good impression or recover from a social misstep.

Sensation Junkie (2 Trait Psychological Flaw)

Cats are sensual creatures to begin with, but you're nearly out of control — whenever a chance for some new or particularly exciting form of stimulation comes by, you must win a Willpower Challenge or try it at least once. What's more, you become addicted to sensations and substances more easily than most, so Narrators should keep an eye on Bastet with this Flaw and may require further Willpower tests to determine if a cat becomes addicted to a particular sensation. Of course, even if the test is successful the Bastet may try the experience anyway if she chooses, but such decisions are of her own free will, not a compulsion. It should be noted that you're not suicidal — after all, once you're dead, the ride is over — and the Willpower Test should be easier for resisting more dangerous sources of stimulation. Dangerous and simply forbidden are seldom the same thing....



Too Curious (3 Trait Psychological Flaw)

"Curiosity killed the cat," as they say, and chances are it was the sorry carcass of one of your ancestors that coined the expression. While all Bastet love secrets, you are positively insane for them and will quite literally follow a mystery to hell and back in order to puzzle it out. In game terms, whenever a mystery of some kind presents itself, you must make a Willpower Challenge; failure means that you'll go out of your way — *really* out of your way — to uncover the answer. The difficulty of this test depends on how much work it looks like you'll have to do; the simpler the mystery appears, the harder the test will be. Note the emphasis on "appears" — many great mysteries begin from something that seems quite simple in the beginning!

Moon-Mad (5 Trait Supernatural Flaw)

Whatever the reason might be, Seline has branded you with a terrible madness that swells as she rises, until it explodes in a fury of destruction during the full moon. You gain two additional Rage Traits whenever the moon is full, or you visit the Court of Luna; this extra Rage is hardly a blessing — it makes you highly irritable under the best conditions and completely psychotic under any kind of stress. You lose all ties on tests to resist frenzy and are troubled by horrific dreams of blood and destruction. Even during the daylight hours, you pace and glower, filled with the building fury of the Moon. Those with powers such as *Aura Perception* notice a blazing glow about you during this time, and even less sensitive souls quickly learn to avoid you. This Flaw requires good roleplaying, and the Storyteller may penalize your character as necessary (you lose your temper in a gather, or lethally lash out at someone accidentally bumping into you) if you're lax about playing out the difficulties.

Multiple Personalities (5 Trait Psychological)

Common among the Ceilican tribe, this disorder switches the Bastet's Pryio, Nature, Demeanor or all three at strange times, leading to highly erratic behavior and great confusion and suspicion for those who know the werecat. Unlike true multiple personality disorder, those identities generated by this Flaw are aware of each other's existence, and most Bastet set up a series of parallel lives to disguise these constant shifts. Other werecats simply flee civilization during such times, returning when their dominant personality is supreme once more. In game terms, the player must construct at least one alternate identity for her character to assume every once in a while, and use appropriate costume and roleplaying changes to indicate the shift. In extreme situations, the Narrator may force the Bastet to make a Willpower Challenge; failure means one of the other identities immediately takes over, or even that a whole new set of characteristics emerges for a time, at the Narrator's discretion.



Renown

Bastet place a great deal of importance on tales of courage and greatness, and like their fellow changing cousins, they award Gifts and other benefits to those whose accomplishments raise them above their fellows. Those who have proved themselves time and again are given the hero's share of any secrets or trinkets in an area, and the spirits themselves pay heed to the actions of these Bastet, for they have shown themselves to be worthy of such responsibilities. Unlike the Garou, most Bastet Renown is based on what you do, not who you serve; some dark acts will still cost any cat Renown, of course, and great sacrifices certainly make one look good, but Bastet largely place the greatest deal of respect in what one is capable of on her own. Whether it's due to fellow cats trading tales of you over taghairm fires or spirits carrying word of your deeds (and misdeeds) far and wide, the Renown system survives.

As their Garou cousins do, the Bastet place a great deal of importance on three general ways of according respect. It's important to note that some actions may win you one type of Renown while losing you another; for example, a Khan who charges into a den of vampires at midnight may well earn Ferocity for the deed (if she survives) but certainly doesn't show much Cleverness on her part.

Cleverness

This category covers how good a cat is at finding secrets, deciphering puzzles and otherwise using her head instead of her claws. It also gives a certain measure of an individual's wit, style and derring-do, so those who would be seen as masterful pranksters or magicians had best mind those acts that grant them this Renown.

• The Clever Cat's Creed

I shall be silent and quick

I shall watch my own shadow

I shall follow the whispers

And survive, learn and prosper

Ferocity

Of course, there is something to be said for those souls who can go in and really get the job done, and the wolves are sadly mistaken when they think of themselves as the only righteous ass-kickers Gaia ever created. Bastet earn this Renown not just for defeating foes and showing physical prowess, but also for displaying combat savvy and a fierce temperament. Style, as always, is key: Charging a foe head-on will win you Ferocity, but setting a cunning ambush will earn you more.

• The Warrior's Chant

I shall stand my ground

Govern my hatred

Master my fury



And scatter foes to the wind

Honor

This is perhaps the most elusive of all the virtues to see in the Bastet, and most outsiders can't find it, claiming instead that cats have no honor at all. This is untrue, of course — cats simply live by a different code than most. The Khan, Pumonca and Bagheera value this Renown especially highly, and even the other tribes agree that Honor is what sets apart mere sneaks and killers from true Bastet. It's a fine line, but a critically important one.

- The Code of the Honorable Folk

I shall be bound by my word

I shall act with good grace

I shall govern my tongue

And defend those like myself

Rank

Rank is a much different thing to the Bastet than it is to the Garou — the Ranks of the wolves reflect different roles in society and the expectations that accompany them, and while Bastet of higher rank are more likely to receive certain important duties than their lower-ranking cousins, to them Rank is really more of a means of controlling access to powerful Gifts and other dangerous secrets. After all, no one would give a submachine gun to a toddler; considering the kinds of powers and lore that Bastet Gifts offer, the werecats aren't in any hurry to hand them out to children or other inexperienced types either.

Though their methods of spreading the word itself may differ, Bastet gain Renown and Rank exactly as Garou do; Cleverness replaces Wisdom, while Ferocity replaces Glory (see **Laws of the Wild**). However, there are the following exceptions:

- Bastet must petition an elder or a spirit, preferably with the *Rite of Recognition*, to grant a permanent Trait of Renown for a deed.

- Bastet Ranks rise more slowly than Garou ones; their society is so loose that it takes a lot more to be recognized.

- Werecats cannot renounce their Renown; there isn't much point to that anyway.

- Like Ragabash Garou, Bastet do not need any particular combination of Renown Traits to attain a Rank, although individual tribes certainly have their preferences — Simba tend to respect cats with much Honor and Ferocity over Cleverness, for example, while the Bagheera value those who show great Cleverness and Honor rather than Ferocity, and so on.

- Renown is lost through personal breaches of respect — killing other Bastet, lying under oath — rather than for obstructions of the Karoush. Bastet do adhere to their Litany, but do so in a far less formal manner than the Garou.



Lying about Renown

Given the nature of the system by which Bastet lay claim to their Renown, the more devious types out there have begun to wonder: Can't I simply lie my way to a higher Rank in no time? Well, the answer is really yes and no. To tell a convincing tall tale at a taghairm, the Bastet must engage in a Social Challenge against those present. If successful, the Bastet gains the normal number of Renown Traits that would be awarded for actually accomplishing the deed. Social Traits gained from Merits, Gifts or other sources do not count for this purpose — only the Bastet's natural, unmodified Social Traits. Anyone who doubts the Bastet's tale can call on her to prove it, and the gathering will weigh the evidence for each side; each "witness" or piece of evidence the Bastet can provide gives her one extra Trait for any challenges involved in this part, while any such individuals or items supporting the challenger's side count likewise for their Traits. A formal duel of words or claws may even be called for, should the normal methods prove inconclusive. Those liars who fail any of the challenges involved in testing their proof screw their story up so badly that no one believes them, and the matter is automatically decided against them.

A Bastet who is caught in this fashion loses *double* the Renown she would have gained and might even lose a permanent Trait or two for particularly vicious or outrageous inventions. This applies even if the claim is proved false months or years down the line, so one who lies had better have a good memory and a way of keeping their "witnesses" happy if they wish to avoid a sudden slip in Renown later on. Thus, lying about Renown is a risky affair where the Bastet can gain much very quickly, but stands to lose a lot more if she's caught.

Gifts

Gifts are the treasured lore of the spirit world, the mystical powers that are every cat's birthright. Like other Changing Breeds, Bastet learn the majority of their Gifts from spirits — while they can learn them from each other, such Gifts take twice the normal time to learn, and cost an extra Experience Trait due to the difficulty of imparting such esoteric information. Of course, some secrets are simply too complicated or dangerous to impart to a Bastet at a given time; until the Bastet has achieved sufficient Rank, no amount of spying or contemplation will allow her to learn a Gift.

It is important to note that while most Gifts simply have a game effect and are finished, to the Bastet herself, the experience is one of great power and spirituality, a moment where she and Seline become one. When she activates a Gift, she is reaching deep into the core of her being, recalling the riddles and lessons taught to her by the spirits and using that knowledge to shape herself and the world into what she desires. The character needn't dramatize and agonize every time she uses a Gift, but she should try keep in mind the origin of her powers, lest she come to look on her character as a cat-headed superhero instead of a mystical synthesis of feline and human.



The Bastet Ranks

Rank	Title	Renown Requirement
Zero*	Kit*	None*
One	Tekhmet	3
Two	Aka	10
Three	Tilau	15
Four	Ilani	20
Five	Bon Bhat	25
Six**	Legend**	25+**

*This only applies to Bastet whose training has yet to begin.

**Only a few truly inspiring Bastet reach this level, and while doing so confers no special benefits, any sane being knows better than to mess with such a powerful werecat!

"Swiping" Gifts

Astute players will notice that many tribes share different Gifts, and that some tribes learn these secrets earlier than others; what's more, some Bastet occasionally befriend Garou or other Changing Breeds and desire to learn their secrets as well. Such "swiping" of Gifts is possible with the Narrator's discretion, but can lead to a *tremendous* amount of trouble for those Bastet caught spying on other tribes or changers. Regardless of social consequences, swiping is subject to certain limits:

If a Bastet normally must learn a Gift at one level, but comes across another race or tribe that has a version of that Gift at a lower level, she *cannot* learn this less expensive version — her natural aptitudes are already established. For example, a Simba cannot learn the Swara version of the Gift *Walking Between Worlds*, which is a Basic Gift for them; she must wait until she can learn the Advanced General Gift instead. This applies to other Changing Breeds as well — if the Nuwisha have a less expensive version of a Bastet Gift, the cat must still wait until she can learn her own version instead (although the coyote might be able to help teach her when she finally is ready).

Additionally, some magic may be difficult or even impossible for a Bastet to learn — bound as they are to social roles and traditions, the auspice Gifts of the Garou are notoriously hard for Bastet to swipe, and most cats simply laugh at the idea of one of their own trying to master the alien secrets of a Rokea or Mokolé. The Storyteller has final say on which Gifts the Bastet are or aren't allowed to swipe, and may also increase the cost or effective "level" (for example, making a Basic Gift an Intermediate one for the



Bastet and Sorcery

Innately magical beings that they are, it is possible for the Bastet to study human sorcery in addition to their normal Gifts and rites, although it is a difficult and time-consuming process for them to do so. This practice is most often encountered among the Bubasti, Ceilican and Qualmi tribes, though theoretically any Bastet can develop sorcerous skills. Provided a teacher is found and a bargain can be struck (which should make for some interesting roleplaying), the Bastet may learn whatever path her teacher is willing and able to impart to her.

Such training takes twice the normal amount of time, however, and is quite expensive — the Bastet must pay 33% more than normal sorcerers do for all their Path levels. Thus, a Basic level of sorcery costs four Experience Traits instead of three, an Intermediate eight Traits instead of six, and an Advanced level costs 12 Traits instead of nine. Likewise, rituals cost an extra Trait per level — Basic rituals cost three Traits instead of two, Intermediate rituals are five instead of four, and so on. Learning the ways of the shadows takes effort!

This practice is too rare to have a list of paths included here; for complete sorcery rules, players should consult **Laws of the Hunt** and the **Laws of the Hunt Player's Guide**.

Note: Though they might believe otherwise, Bastet can never learn the reality-warping ways of True Magic; their Avatars (as the magi would say) are already focused in the direction of belonging to their race. Try as they might, the music of the Spheres is forever beyond the grasp of the cats.

Bastet, and so on) of such Gifts as she sees fit. Let common sense rule in the event of any dispute.

Ultimately, the needs of the story should take precedence: if it is exciting and dramatic for a Bastet to learn the secrets of another group, then it should be permitted. But if the player simply wants to min-max her Bastet into a war machine or invincible manipulator, it's better not to allow such mystical theft. And, of course, there are always consequences if such theft is discovered....

General Gifts

These Gifts are widely available to all Bastet, regardless of breed or tribe. They are shared openly at taghairms, and most spirits are willing to teach at least one or two of them, although the more esoteric and powerful Gifts still require the usual negotiations.

Basic



Banish Sickness — By placing her hands on the target and spending a level of the *Medicine* Ability, the Bastet may purge all illnesses, diseases and venoms from the victim's body. Particularly virulent conditions or toxins might require spending one to three Gnosis Traits as well; at the Storyteller's discretion, some illnesses may not be curable with this Gift.

Call Spirits — Though Bastet are more distanced from the Umbra than their fellow changers, they have no less of a need to communicate with the worlds beyond. This Gift allows the Bastet to understand any spirit she encounters as well as cast her voice into the Umbra to petition nearby spirits. Note that the Bastet has no automatic power to command, dispel or even perceive spirits because of this Gift, although she may certainly bargain or otherwise interact with them, as well as use Abilities such as *Intimidation* or *Leadership*. A Static Gnosis Challenge against the local Gauntlet level is required, unless the Bastet is already in the Penumbra, in which case this Gift is automatic.

Catfeet — As the *Lupus* Gift; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Cat Sight — With this Gift, the Bastet may see clearly even in absolute darkness, and even other impediments are less hindering than normal. The Bastet may ignore all Trait penalties due to darkness, and any other Trait penalties due to factors such as smoke or rain are halved (round down). This Gift is reflexive once learned and costs nothing to activate, although the Bastet's eyes glow an eerie green while it is in effect.

Command Attention — The werecat can use her feline presence to make a very memorable first impression. Activating the Gift requires a victory (not a tie) on a Simple Test with the Storyteller. At Storyteller discretion, she may attempt further Simple Tests, one per each Social Trait relating to the Bastet's intended effect (i.e., intimidation, seduction, etc.). If successful, the Bastet draws the immediate attention of everyone in the room as she enters. She also gains one bonus Social Trait per success for use on her first Social Challenge. This bonus applies only once when entering a room, and all the Traits gained must be the same. Note that the reactions of others after her entrance will depend on the actions of the werecat and their own feelings for her, but turning so many heads does make one hell of an impression!

Dowsing — By sniffing around and pawing the earth (i.e., making a Mental Challenge), a Bastet can locate nearby water sources and determine whether such sources are pure. The difficulty of the challenge depends on how far away the water is (it must be within 100 feet) and how much water is present.

Eerie Eyes — As the *Homid* Gift *Paralyzing Stare*; see **Laws of the Wild**.

First Slash — As the *Ahroun* Gift *Spirit of the Fray*; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Lick Wounds — As the *Theurge* Gift *Mother's Touch*; see **Laws of the Wild**. The Bastet may use this Gift on herself as well, however, and may make as many healing "licks" as she likes, provided she spends the appropriate amount of Gnosis each time.



Night's Passage — Calling on their natural bond with darkness, the Bastet may blend with shadows almost completely, becoming almost impossible to detect until total illumination is provided or the cat chooses to act. By spending a Gnosis Trait, the Bastet becomes invisible in areas of dim light — treat this invisibility the same as the Ragabash Gift *Blur of the Milky Eye*, including the gesture used to indicate such invisible status (see **Laws of the Wild**). The werecat does not become insubstantial during this time, but until he chooses to leave the darkened area, attack someone, or the area is completely illuminated, he is totally invisible. Supernatural creatures may attempt to pierce this concealment with *Heightened Senses* or similar powers.

Night Terror — Standing over a sleeping target, the Bastet may evoke the legendary cat fear of old, giving the victim terrible nightmares. To use this Gift, the Bastet must actually sit by the sleeping victim for several minutes, spend a Gnosis Trait and defeat the victim in a Mental Challenge; if successful, the victim suffers horrible nightmares for a number of nights equal to the number of Mental Traits the Bastet wishes to spend, which must be declared before the challenge is resolved. Those Traits are still lost, even if the Bastet loses the challenge. The Bastet may choose some general images or themes for the nightmares if he likes, but cannot control them entirely. Victims of such attacks lose a Willpower Trait from the experience, and do not receive any resting benefits (such as healing) for any affected nights. If the target is unfortunate enough to have the Flaw *Nightmares*, the Bastet receives a free retest on the Gift challenge; what's more, due to their susceptibility, such victims may suffer more serious effects such as additional Willpower Trait loss or even a temporary derangement at the Narrator's discretion.

Open Seal — As the Ragabash Gift; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Pathfinder's Pride — This Gift allows the Bastet to sharpen her sense of direction incredibly, allowing her to find her way out of anything from a desert or dense forest to artificial hazards such as mazes. The Bastet must win a Static Mental Challenge against a Narrator's difficulty; most natural terrain has a difficulty of four or five Traits, while artificial landscapes are seven or eight Traits. Even Gifts of confusion such as the Garou Gift *Trackless Waste* may be defeated with this Gift, with a Static Mental Challenge against a difficulty of the user's Mental Traits + 3. Note: This power does not provide any means of transportation; the Bastet merely learns where the exit is with this power — getting to it is her problem.

Razor Claws — As the Ahroun Gift; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Sense Magic — As the Uktena Gift; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Sense of the Prey — As the Black Furies Gift; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Sense the Truth — As the Philodox Gift *Truth of Gaia*; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Sense Unmaker's Hand — As the Metis Gift *Sense Wyrn*; see **Laws of the Wild**.



Shriek — Loosing a bloodcurdling cry, the Bastet may render those near her deaf for a short time, and even those farther away will still be in a good deal of pain. The Bastet must make an appropriate shriek and spend a number of Physical Traits; doing so means that anyone within three paces is considered deaf for a number of turns equal to the number of Physical Traits the Bastet chooses to spend. Those outside that range but within hearing distance, as well as characters who were deafened after the time has expired are one Trait down on all challenges for the duration of the scene. Those with active *Heightened Senses* or similar powers are automatically deafened, no matter how far from the Bastet they are, and suffer the penalties for twice as long as normal. Casual shriekers beware, however — allies and bystanders are also affected by this power! Deaf characters automatically fail any challenges involving hearing and are surprised by any attacks they cannot perceive due to their condition, such as gunfire from behind them or similar tactics.

Silent Stalking — Calling on their innate stealth and predatory nature (and winning a Static Physical Challenge against five Traits), the Bastet may silence all sounds of her passing, no matter what surface she might cross. Floorboards don't squeak, stones don't crunch and twigs don't snap as the cat passes; this Gift does not conceal the Bastet in any other way than silencing the sounds the cat normally makes by walking.

Spirit's Sight — Although they cannot cross over themselves without appropriate Gifts, most Bastet still need to interact with spirits from time to time, and peering into the spirit world is often a good way to learn interesting secrets. By winning a Simple Test, the Bastet may peek freely into the Penumbra for the rest of the scene and see any spirits or other beings in the area; most spirits don't notice such observation, but you never know. Remember, this Gift doesn't impart any ability to speak to spirits (that's *Call Spirits*, above), so it can be quite frustrating for the Bastet to observe events without being able to contribute herself.

Swipe — As the Ragabash Gift *Taking the Forgotten*; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Treeclimber — By extending and sharpening his claws, the Bastet may climb just about any surface with ease. A Static Physical Challenge against eight Traits must be made to climb truly challenging surfaces (sheer ice or smooth steel); otherwise, the character can climb any surface roughly as fast as he can jog.

Touch the Mind — As the Metis Gift *Mental Speech*; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Intermediate

Attunement — As the Bone Gnawer Gift, except it only functions for the Bastet's Den-Realm and the corresponding area in the mortal world; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Call the Pride — As the Galliard Gift *Call of the Wyld*, except by spending two Social Traits and winning a Static Social Challenge with the *Animal Ken* Ability, the Bastet may also attempt to summon local cats



(domestic or wild, by location). The difficulty of this challenge is usually four Traits, but can vary depending on the type of cat called — wild cats are harder to call than domesticated ones — and the distance between the cats and the Bastet. While not a life-or-death command, this Gift does ensure that these cats will attempt to aid the Bastet as best they can. Remember, however, that they are still regular animals and cannot follow complex commands — spying on an area and simple guard duty are within their talents, but commands such as “Attack anyone who strikes me with the intent to harm” are right out. At the Narrator’s discretion, other animals appropriate to the Bastet’s breed may be summoned instead — birds for the Qualmi, jackals for the Bubasti, etc.; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Cheshire Prank — This Gift certainly existed before Lewis Carroll came along, but the Bastet don’t mind honoring one who shows their kind appropriate respect. By putting on a wide grin and spending a Gnosis Trait, the Bastet may fade away, disappearing from all forms of normal and magical perception; this Gift even foils electronic methods of detection such as cameras and motion sensors. Even *Heightened Senses* cannot detect a grinning Bastet! This Gift takes 10 seconds or three turns to activate, and lasts for one scene or until the Bastet reveals himself (normal rules of invisibility apply). In a pinch, this Gift may be made instantaneous by spending three Gnosis Traits. Additionally, this Gift only functions in Feline and Chatro forms, and changing shape ends the invisibility immediately. This Gift does nothing to muffle sound.

Clawstorm — Cornering an animal is seldom a wise decision, and Bastet with this power become holy terrors when their backs are against the wall — a whirling, hissing blur of movement that sends limbs flying in its wake. By spending a Trait each of Rage and Gnosis, the Bastet receives two extra attacks that turn (to a maximum of three actions per turn, total — the Bastet cannot spend Rage normally for extra actions while using this Gift). Only simple slashing attacks can be made; the Bastet cannot fire a gun, travel more than two steps or attempt elaborate maneuvers, although she may use edged melee weapons. This Gift cannot be used more times in a single combat than the Bastet has stamina-related Physical Traits.

Command the Prey — By purring and trilling softly, the Bastet may actually bring her prey to her, as long as she stands still and does nothing but call to them. The Bastet must make a Social Challenge to enact this Gift; mortals or animals are at a two-Trait penalty to resist this Gift. Supernatural creatures may ignore it with a Willpower Trait. This Gift only functions if the target was unaware of the Bastet’s presence — as far as they know, they *want* to head in that direction, and will do so until they’re within arm’s reach of the Bastet. After that, the trance is broken as soon as the werecat moves, but it gives her the advantage of having the first move, be it a witty opening line or a killing leap. This Gift does not function in combat situations.

Farsight — By calling to a spirit or staring into a reflective surface, the Bastet may conjure images of distant locations. This Gift is easier if the Bastet



has visited a place before, but such knowledge is not essential. Places viewed in this manner are seen in a "bird's eye" perspective — far away enough to see the entire area well, but close enough to discern objects. A Static Mental Challenge against six Traits is required if the Bastet wishes to "zoom in" on specific things, or to use perception-based Gifts such as *Sense the Unmaker's Hand*. To activate this Gift, the werecat must have access to one of the two sources listed above, spend a Gnosis Trait and win a Static Mental Challenge against a variable Trait difficulty: places the cat has known intimately are six Traits; places visited seldom are seven; places the Bastet has been to once are eight; and places never visited have a nine-Trait difficulty. This Gift lasts for one minute per permanent Mental Trait the Bastet has, and is effective up to 30 miles away. Note that only places may be spied on, not people, although any people in the area of effect may be observed normally.

Gift of Rage — With this power, the Bastet may summon up a killing fury in which all wounds are ignored; this is typically a last resort of the normally reserved Bastet, and most cats use this Gift only once. The Bastet must spend a Rage Trait to invoke the frenzy, but once it is started it lasts until all danger has passed (and just about anyone or anything counts as danger in this state). This Gift is otherwise identical to Garou berserk frenzy in every way; for details on this state, see **Laws of the Wild**.

Ignore Pain — As the Philodox Gift *Resist Pain*; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Impala's Flight — As the Silent Strider Gift *Speed of Thought*; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Purr — Ah, that feline charm! With this Gift, the Bastet greatly boosts her natural seductive powers, making the object of her attention want nothing more than to spoil her and shower her with affection. By spending a Willpower Trait and winning a Social Challenge, the Bastet creates a powerful infatuation in her target; he will not blindly follow her commands or bring harm to himself or others, but he will think the world of her and do just about anything to humor her, make her happy and ensure that she's safe. What's more, the target sincerely believes his affection is genuine (and it might even become so, over time), and resists efforts to persuade him otherwise. Naturally, violence or unreasonable requests ("Oh, won't you murder that Get of Fenris elder, snookums?") destroy the charm, and if broken in this fashion this Gift can never be used on that target again. This Gift lasts for one session, although the target may choose to spend a Willpower Trait every hour/scene, whichever is longer, to retest this Gift.

Righteous Gaze — Bastet don't suffer fools lightly, and they like liars even less. This Gift allows the Bastet to wring the truth from a suspect, as well as shame those who have been deceitful to them. To use this Gift, the Bastet must stare his target in the eye for a turn, accuse him of lying and win a Mental Challenge; if successful, the target confesses any lies he told, loses a Willpower Trait and falls to his knees in tearful humiliation. If the accused is telling the truth, this Gift merely makes him uneasy; he also automatically regains any Traits he lost due to this Gift's use.



Sense Silver — As the Ahroun Gift; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Spirit Claws — By winning a Simple Test, the Bastet may strike from the Penumbra into the mortal world or attack an Umbral opponent through the Gauntlet without stepping sideways herself. Only natural or fetish weapons may be used for such attacks, and each new attack requires another Simple Test. This Gift may only be used within the Bastet's Den-Realm, and of course the Bastet must have some means of *seeing* her opponents before she can attack them....

Spitfire — By emitting an evil hiss, the Bastet may spit a stream of fire at his opponent. The Bastet must spend a Gnosis Trait and make a Physical Challenge (retested with the *Firearms Ability*) to hit his target; success means that the target suffers two health levels of aggravated damage. Flammable items may also ignite. Each additional bolt of flame requires another Gnosis expenditure, though there is no other limit to how many times this Gift may be used.

Wolf's Terror — As the Ahroun Gift *Silver Claws*; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Advanced

Future Warning — By spending two Gnosis Traits, the Bastet receives premonitions whenever danger is near; these premonitions do not necessarily specify exactly *what* is placing her in danger, but they provide an excellent warning system nonetheless. Treat Bastet with this Gift as having the Merit *Danger Sense* as well as the Silent Strider tribal Advantage for the remainder of the scene (see **Laws of the Wild** for details on this Advantage). Obviously, using this Gift too often invites paranoia and false visions of doom; the Storyteller is fully entitled to lessen the effects of this Gift or even suspend its powers entirely for Bastet who keep this Gift constantly "active."

Jump to the Moon — By performing a great ritual to honor Seline, the Bastet may open a Moon Bridge from her Den-Realm to the moon's surface; if successful, friendly Lunes arrive to escort the Bastet and her guests to the Court of Luna. Once there, the Bastet and her charges may breathe and move normally, and are free to explore the wonders of the moon's mysteries. This Gift may only be attempted once per night and requires that the Bastet accumulate 10 successes in an Extended Static Mental Challenge against eight Traits. The initial attempt takes one hour of real time, and each subsequent attempt requires another half hour of supplication; if dawn arrives before the successes are accumulated, the ritual is wasted. Likewise, if the Bastet does not return by dawn, the Moon Bridge dissolves and she must create another.

For those unfamiliar with the concept of Extended Challenges, they work in the following manner: the character involved begins by making a Static Challenge against the difficulty given, and continues making challenges until they either reach the number of successes they need or they lose a challenge, at which time the Extended Challenge is over and the number of contests the character won is considered his accumulated successes. The character may spend Willpower or attempt to overbid to keep the Extended Challenge going, but no other method of retesting may be used.



Example of Play: *Whik, a Ceilican Bastet, is attempting to Jump to the Moon. He has a total of 10 Mental Traits. After the first hour of the ritual, he calls the Spirit Keeper over and they perform the first set of challenges. Whik wins the first two challenges, and ties the third — since he has 10 Mental Traits, though, and the difficulty for this Gift is eight, he wins the tie and the challenge continues. He wins one more Challenge, but then loses the next one. He does not have enough Mental Traits to overbid against the difficulty, and so this round of Extended Challenges is over — he'll have to try again in another half an hour. However, he did manage to accumulate four successes out of the 10 for his first round.*

Perfect Passage — The ultimate spies and burglars, Bastet with this Gift may travel straight through any obstruction in her path, opening doors, springing locks, deactivating security devices as she passes. This Gift doesn't render the Bastet invisible, but it does eliminate scent and footprints, and the Bastet may even walk through walls if need be. This Gift requires one Gnosis Trait per scene (per hour if it's a long trip), and a Static Mental Challenge every time the cat wishes to pass through a solid object or defeat a particularly difficult obstacle. Failing the challenge means the obstacle cannot be surpassed (the cat may even be discovered, depending on the obstacle); if the cat is walking through a solid object, she must immediately win a Simple Test or become trapped in the object. This condition is treated the same as being trapped in the Gauntlet, including the conditions needed to escape, although it should be noted that the cat is not actually in the Umbra; see **Laws of the Wild**. Powers such as *Sense Magic* and *Aura Perception* may detect traces of this Gift's usage, but this Gift can only be detected while in progress at the Narrator's discretion, and even then such attempts are at a two-Trait penalty. This Gift only applies to the Bastet and anything she can carry in her jaws or hands.

Soothe/Summon Storm — With this Gift, the Bastet may call up a terrible storm to ravage a particular area. Casual users beware, however — the cat is not immune to the weather she conjures, and the stronger the storm the Bastet wishes to call up, the harder it is to summon, and once called the storm normally must run its course naturally, which may take hours. This Gift requires two Gnosis Traits and at least an hour of capering and yowling to the heavens, after which time the Bastet must make a Static Mental Challenge against a difficulty equal to the type of weather she desires; a basic rain storm is difficulty six, a severe thunderstorm is difficulty eight, and a tornado or small hurricane is difficulty 10. If the weather is exceptionally unusual for the area (a rainstorm in the desert), add five Traits to the difficulty and another 30 minutes to the time required. Dispelling a storm called up this way requires another Gnosis Trait and another Static Challenge against a difficulty two Traits higher than the original. Failing the dispelling challenge means the storm must run its course normally.

Walking Between Worlds — Bastet cannot easily travel between worlds as their other cousins can; however, those lucky and experienced enough to learn this rare Gift have finally developed just such a talent. A Bastet with this



Gift may step sideways just as Garou do, with the same difficulties, requirements and so on for doing so. Once learned, this Gift is reflexive and costs nothing to use (beyond any costs and challenges that crossing the Gauntlet might normally incur).

Withering Stare — This Gift allows the Bastet to cripple and kill her foes with little more than a disapproving stare; using this Gift against fellow Bastet is considered a heinous crime, but it does occur. To use the Gift, the Bastet must lock eyes with her target, spend a Gnosis Trait and make a challenge of her Rage against the target's Willpower rating. If the Bastet succeeds, her target takes an aggravated health level of damage for each Rage Trait she wishes to spend. Once trapped, the target cannot break the Bastet's gaze until either the werecat grants release, the Bastet runs out of Rage or the victim dies; the victim may still defend himself against other attacks, however, and supernatural creatures may spend a Willpower Trait to break the stare after the first round of its use if they did not succeed in blocking it initially.

Breed Gifts

Homid

Basic

Cat Claws — By spending a Physical Trait, the Bastet may instantly unsheathe her claws in Homid and Sokto forms and make claw attacks just as if in beast form. The claws hurt a bit to use, however, and are impossible to hide, so the Bastet had best exercise some judgment as to when to employ them or attract a great deal of negative attention. Once resheathed, the claws cannot be called forth again without using this Gift. The Bastet suffers the Negative Trait *Painful* on all attacks made with these claws.

Eavesdropper's Ear — A Gift of the Whispers Jamak, this Gift allows the werecat to hear things well outside the normal human range, as well as understand conversations from extraordinary distances away. This Gift costs a Mental Trait to activate (cup your hand around your ear to indicate use of this Gift); the Bastet can also hear into the high and low sonic spectrum with ease, and gains hearing equal to the Gift *Heightened Senses*, including vulnerability to sudden loud noises.

Jam Technology — As the Homid Gift; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Sweet Hunter's Smile — With this subtly powerful Gift, the Bastet may win friends more easily to her side or scare her foes off with but a look. The Bastet must simply give her target a smile and expend a level of the *Primal Urge* Ability, and she gains the additional Social Traits *Magnetic* x 2 or *Intimidating* x 2 (player's choice). These Traits can be used up like any other Social Traits.

Intermediate

Babel's Cure — With this Gift, the Bastet can translate any language or turn all communication into unintelligible gibberish. By expending a Social Trait, the Bastet can affect all those within 50 feet (generally, within the same



room) for one turn, making everyone understood or scrambling their words as she chooses. This Gift extends to written languages as well.

Craft of the Maker — As the Homid Gift *Reshape Object*; see *Laws of the Wild*.

Monkey's Uncle — Ever the deceptive ones, the Bastet may adopt the guise of any human form in seconds: physical prowess, attractiveness, racial features, gender and age may all be altered. This Gift requires a Social Trait and a turn of concentration, although at the Narrator's discretion truly radical changes (going from a midget to a professional wrestler) may require a Static Social Challenge against five Traits as well. All changes should be indicated with a description card of some sort, and those with supernatural senses may detect the change (though not see the cat's true form) with a Mental Challenge.

What's the Password? — The Bastet may commune with Net-spirits, allowing her to learn all manner of digital secrets: passwords, accounts, system files, even encryption codes. This Gift requires access to a computer (though not necessarily one that normally has Net access), a Gnosis Trait and a Static Social Challenge. The difficulty of the Challenge depends on what the Bastet wishes to access: simple things like accounts or basic corporate records are three or four Traits, while cracking government systems or sensitive corporate systems would be eight or nine Traits. This exchange should also be roleplayed out with the Spirit Keeper if at all possible, since most Net-spirits are quite bizarre and may require some form of bribery.

Advanced

Black Friday — A true terror in this Information Age, this Gift allows the Bastet to crash an entire computer network, thoroughly destroying any and all information it contained. It can be very risky, but the potential damage that can be done makes it an acceptable risk in the eyes of many monkeywrenchers. The Bastet need not actually operate a single computer terminal, but she does need some means of contacting the Net Spiders, be it a trip to the Penumbra, spirit-speaking Gifts or even a quick message typed into the target system. As with the Gift *What's the Password?*, this interaction should be roleplayed out if possible. In addition, the Bastet must win a Static Social Challenge against a difficulty determined by the Narrator. Once set in motion, however, the Spiders will destroy the data in the target system without fail; especially skillful technicians may be able to recover it eventually, but it's arduous work and will take a minimum of days, even weeks. Failing the Static Challenge requires the Bastet to immediately win or tie a Simple Test; failure on the Simple Test turns the Spiders on the Bastet's own files. Note also that this kind of interference immediately sets off any and all security measures the system has; keep one eye on the exit before using this Gift!

Deny the Hungry — With but a small gesture of contempt, the Bastet may cause crops to fail, plants to wither and otherwise create a famine of impressive proportions. This Gift requires the expenditure of a *permanent*



Rage Trait, as well as a Static Mental Challenge against seven Traits. If successful, waterholes or lakes are fouled, crops fail, and one ton of food or drink is ruined for up to a mile around per permanent Mental Trait the Bastet possesses. Only the Gift *Redeem the Waste*, a powerful *Rite of Cleansing* or similarly potent magic has any hope of undoing this damage; left on its own, the affected areas remain foul and useless for at least a year. Obviously, this power comes from Cahlash, and can be detected by appropriate Gifts.

Metis

Basic

Blinding Moonbeam Gaze — By winning or tying a Simple Test and calling on her bond with Seline, the Bastet may project beams of blinding illumination from her eyes, allowing her to blind foes and light an area as if she had a high-powered flashlight. This Gift lasts for up to as many turns as the Bastet has permanent Gnosis Traits; if the Bastet wishes to blind an opponent, she uses the usual rules for ranged combat and must make a Physical Challenge, retested with the *Brawl* Ability (even if outside normal *Brawl* range).

Create Element — As the Metis Gift; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Sense Primal Nature — This Gift is exactly identical to the Gift *Sense the Unmaker's Hand*, except it can also detect which of the three forces the target embodies most strongly: Rahjah (Weaver), Nala (Wyld) or Cahlash (Wyrn). Thus werecreatures and faeries typically show Nala's kiss, Black Spiral Dancers and most vampires bear the mark of Cahlash, and Rahjah's hand lies on certain Glass Walkers and technomagi. This applies to places and objects as well — ask the Narrator if in doubt.

Whisker Sight — By spending a Mental Trait and attuning herself to her own rarefied senses, the Bastet may detect everything around her within 10 feet as if it lay in plain sight, even invisible foes or opponents sneaking up behind her. The Bastet may ignore all penalties for darkness, blindness or other environmental factors at close range (distance attacks suffer normal penalties) and may attempt to detect invisible targets with a Mental Challenge, just like a character with *Heightened Senses*. This Gift lasts for the remainder of the scene. Note that the Bastet does not automatically detect hidden objects for what they are, only that they are present.

Intermediate

Fist of Cahlash — With a ferocious snarl, the Bastet may destroy items of technology around her or inflict serious injury on living (or undead) targets. Against inanimate targets, the Bastet need only spend Rage Traits — each Trait spent in such a fashion destroys 10 pounds or 10 cubic feet of matter. Against living or undead targets, this Gift requires a successful Physical Challenge as well as a Rage Trait — success means that the target suffers one aggravated health level of damage. No more than one Rage Trait per challenge may be spent in this fashion. This Gift has no effect on fetishes, self-



aware objects or spirit-matter of any kind, not even spirits that have materialized or are otherwise present in the living world.

Moon's Gateway — By calling on Lunes for assistance, the Bastet may open Moon Bridges between two places of mystical power — obviously, Den-Realms and caerns are the most common locations, although faerie freeholds, wraith Haunts and similar locations are possible destinations if the cat is bold (or crazy) enough. This Gift may only be used at night and requires a Static Mental Challenge against seven Traits as well as one Gnosis Trait for every hundred miles the Bastet needs to travel. Success means a one-way portal opens to the target locations — any number of roughly human-sized beings may travel through ahead of the Bastet, but once she crosses into the gateway it vanishes immediately behind her. Failing the Static Mental Challenge means the gateway might still open, but now it will drop any travelers off in some exotic and/or dangerous location in the spirit world instead. Please note that while the *player* knows the outcome of the challenge, the Bastet herself may not know if this Gift is entirely successful until she attempts to cross over.

Redeem the Waste — Closely bonded to the wild as they are, metis often need to undo the damage done to it by the hands of unscrupulous folk. To use this Gift, the metis must claim the area in question (as per the *Rite of Claiming*, though that Rite need not actually be used), make a Simple Test, and spend a Gnosis Trait for each half-mile of land she wishes to restore. If successful, the land will revitalize drastically — new plants spring up overnight, toxins are flushed from the land, water is purged of impurities, etc. This restoration is permanent until someone befouls the land again.

Spirit-Touch — As the Intermediate General Gift *Spirit Claws*, except it can function everywhere, not just within the Bastet's Den-Realm.

Advanced

Moon Sense — As the General Gift *Farsight*, except that the werecat may see anything that transpires under Seline's light (indoors, near windows, within the Penumbra, *anywhere* that's touched by moonlight), no matter what the range might be, although she must spend a Gnosis Trait for each minute she wishes to scry on locations in the Penumbra or beyond a hundred miles in the normal world. The Bastet also must use a body of relatively calm water for her scrying; choppy seas are no use, although even artificial sources such as a swimming pool will suffice in a pinch. Those being spied upon may detect the scrying with a Mental Challenge if they possess supernatural senses or other forms of magical detection; if successful, they see a moonlit cat fade away before their eyes. Such discovery ends this Gift immediately.

Wrath of Nala — As the Advanced General Gift *Soothe/Summon Storm*.

Feline

Basic

Killer's Leap — Bastet with this Gift are capable of astounding leaps, and when these cats spring any unfortunate targets caught in their path are in for



a world of hurt. By spending a Gnosis Trait, the Bastet gains the Physical Traits *Nimble*, *Quick* and *Dexterous*. These Traits last for one scene and only apply to challenges where the Bastet is leaping or dodging. At the Narrator's discretion, the Bastet may also earn a Fair Escape with this Gift in some circumstances.

Kitten's Cry — With a Social Challenge and a suitably pathetic-sounding meow, the Bastet can make a target go out of his way to aid and comfort her; this power even works on foes in combat, who will break off their hostilities unless attacked in return. Targets will not do anything outrageous, but will help the Bastet with basic needs and simple requests as long as it's within their power and doesn't place them in direct danger. Beware, for foes with absolutely no pity in their hearts (such as Banes, sociopaths and other wholly foul creatures) will simply torment the Bastet more.

Mark As Mine — By spending a Gnosis Trait and spraying an object or area with musk, the Bastet essentially places a supernatural "Mine!" or "Keep Out" sign upon it indicating the object is her property. Shapeshifters will immediately sense the mark for what it is (including that a Bastet placed it), and even other supernatural creatures will feel uneasy entering the area or handling the object, as if trespassing on someone's land or rifling through another's prized possessions. Affected items or areas should be indicated with distinctive insignias or description cards. (Kind Bastet should spare their Narrators a headache and refrain from spraying everything in sight.) This mark may be perceived with sensory magic and removed with appropriate magical means; otherwise, the mark lasts until the Bastet herself wishes it removed. Yes, this Gift does work on living creatures, but does not harm them in any way; supernatural creatures may shrug off any unwanted marks by spending an appropriate Trait (Gnosis, Glamour, Blood, etc.), provided they are somehow aware of the mark in the first place.

Perfect Cover — As the Ragabash Gift *Blissful Ignorance*, except that the invisible subject must remain motionless (and this Gift is cancelled immediately by movement), but the cat may also attempt to hide objects and even other people; each extra target of this Gift requires a win or a tie on a Simple Test and the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait. Furthermore, this Gift only works if there is some form of existing cover, be it shadows, undergrowth or other distracting or concealing factors. Of course, the Bastet can use this Gift on herself. Supernatural senses have trouble detecting targets hidden by this Gift, and add two Traits to all sensory difficulties to detect them. Otherwise, see *Laws of the Wild*.

Intermediate

Ghosts At Play — By spraying the area with musk, the Bastet may reveal all nearby active spirits, including any wraiths in the area; the Gauntlet remains intact, and this Gift does not harm the spirits in any way, but everyone in the area (even normal humans) may now perceive spirits as if they possessed the Gift *Spirit's Sight*. This Gift lasts for one scene and can be used



on an area the size of a small forest clearing or large room. Note that conditions like the Fog and the Delirium still apply — most mortals really aren't ready to see what lives in the worlds beyond! This Gift costs nothing to use, but requires Static Social Challenge against the Gauntlet as well as a minute or two to properly spray the area, and thus cannot usually be performed during combat.

Hand of Will — As the Uktena Gift *Hand of the Earth Lords*; see *Laws of the Wild*.

Underbelly — Feral cats must choose their prey carefully to survive; with this Gift, the Bastet develops a natural eye for weaknesses, allowing her to tear through most foes with but a few strokes. With a successful Mental Challenge, the Bastet may make a Simple Test as a follow-up to her next successful strike; success means that the target takes an additional level of damage. Magical objects or wards require a Gnosis Trait in addition to the Static Challenge, and this Gift does not function on spirits of any kind.

Whisker Sight — As the Basic Metis Gift of the same name.

Advanced

Judgment of Pestilence — Acting as a carrier of disease, the Bastet may move a deadly disease from one area to another, bringing relief to populations that win her favor and ravaging those who have invited Nala's displeasure. This Gift doesn't actually create a disease; rather, the Bastet must actually absorb it herself, then travel to the target area and exhale the toxins into the night air. This process requires a Gnosis Trait and a Simple Test to enact. Survivors at the original site miraculously recover, while the disease runs its course in the new location normally. This Gift is not without risk — if the Bastet fails the first Simple Test, or if she carries the disease for more than a single night or day (next sunrise or sunset), she must immediately win or tie a Simple Test or she quickly dies, overwhelmed by the toxins in her bloodstream. (Willpower may be spent on this Simple Test.)

Revolt of the Land — As the Red Talon Gift *Quicksand*, except the Bastet may use other natural features to entangle or otherwise immobilize her targets, as suits her whim; vines and branches may twist to life, rocks grind themselves into jagged spikes, rivers spin into whirlpools, etc. See *Laws of the Wild*, pages 116-117.

Tribal Gifts

Bagheera

Basic

Humbaba's Escape — With this clever Gift, the Bagheera may twist and contort his body, allowing him to escape all manner of bonds as well as squeeze through tiny openings. Simple restraints such as ropes and handcuffs can automatically be defeated, at no cost to the Bastet; the Bastet may also spend a Gnosis Trait to receive a free retest on a related *Security* or *Streetwise*



Challenge. In addition, major body adjustments such as dislocating all the limbs or popping the spine out of place to crawl into a tiny hole require a Gnosis Trait. While out of joint, the Bastet is two Traits down on any challenges to resist damage, as his oddly contorted form is easily damaged.

Treeclimber — As the Basic General Gift.

Lawgiver's Legacy — As the Basic General Gift *Command Attention*, except it costs a Gnosis Trait to enact, and the presence it creates lasts for an entire scene. Those in the area are not compelled to follow the Bagheera's every movement, but they will treat him with a measure of respect, even if they are bitter enemies, and tend to obey commands more readily. The Bagheera also receives a free retest on all *Leadership* and *Law* Challenges while using this Gift.

Ojas Surge — By channeling ojas, the mystic energy within all living things, the Bagheera may boost himself beyond his normal limits. To use this Gift, the Bastet must meditate for at least five minutes, during which time he cannot interact with anyone. At the end of that time, the Bastet must make a Static Gnosis Challenge against four Traits; success means that he feels invigorated, refreshed and gains one Trait per permanent Gnosis Trait he possesses, which he can distribute in the following ways: Physical Traits, charisma-related Social Traits, or perception-related Mental Traits. Thus a Bagheera with five permanent Gnosis Traits gains five Traits from this Gift; he may add all five to Physical, three Physical and two Social, one Physical and four Mental, etc. These bonus Traits can be combined with those gained from shapeshifting, but cannot be "stacked" with any other Gifts except with the express permission of the Storyteller. The Bagheera may not attempt to channel *ojas* more than once per scene, and a failed attempt renders the cat depressed and unable to use this Gift again until the next session.

Intermediate

Cobra's Dance — By swaying hypnotically, spending a Gnosis Trait and defeating his target with a Social Challenge, the Bastet may freeze the target in place. Those frozen can do nothing, not even speak, until the Bastet releases them, stops the dance, leaves the area, or attacks them. If attacked, the target is surprised for the first round of combat and cannot attempt to injure the Bastet as a result of the initial combat challenge, although they are free to do as they please afterward.

Traveler's Tongues — As the Intermediate General Gift *Babel's Cure*.

Paradox of Time — Those learned cats with this Gift understand that time is not the linear phenomenon that most people believe it is and can fill others with this knowledge as well. Such a glimpse of the truth of reality can be a powerfully spiritual experience, but it also has more direct benefits as well — those affected by this Gift are disoriented due to their altered perceptions, and suffer a two-Trait penalty on all actions for the next two turns. This Gift requires that the Bagheera talk to his target in low, hypnotic tones and make a successful Mental Challenge; furthermore, any targets with a supernatural



grasp of time — changelings with the *Chronos Art*, vampires with the *Temporis Discipline*, or mages with the *Time Sphere* — are completely immune to this Gift's effects.

Potter's Clay — As the Intermediate Homid Gift *Craft of the Maker*.

Advanced

Part the Curtain — As the Intermediate General Gift *Walking Between Worlds*, except the Bastet may bring others along with him as well, up to as many "guests" as he has permanent Gnosis Traits. Of course, unless they have their own means of returning, these individuals would do well to stay close to the Bagheera or risk being lost in the Umbra. Individuals cannot be taken into the Umbra against their will.

Shiva's Might — This Gift is the ultimate in last-ditch combat tricks, but it virtually guarantees the Bastet takes at least a few of his enemies with him. To activate this Gift, the Bagheera must emit a hearty roar, then spend two Rage Traits and two Gnosis Traits; immediately afterward, he transforms into a 12-foot-tall, six-armed werepanther wielding supernatural flaming swords in each hand, and begins hacking and biting anything in his path into tiny pieces. His Physical Traits are doubled in this state (known as the *juddho form*), Traits from shapeshifting included, and the Bastet receives three free additional attacks every turn from his extra arms. The swords are considered the same as hakarrs for Trait purposes, except they inflict aggravated damage and have no Negative Traits. Furthermore, the Bastet is in deep frenzy the entire time, and incapable of rational communication or combat tactics; the good news is that this means that Social and Mental powers are useless against him, but at the same time the Bagheera cannot use any such powers of his own, and must attack *everyone* within reach — even allies and bystanders — making this Gift exceedingly dangerous to use. This transformation lasts for as many turns as the Bastet has permanent Rage Traits; when it ends, the Bastet immediately reverts to breed form, loses any remaining Rage Traits he might have and sleeps for at least two hours of game time, during which time he cannot be awakened.

Balam

Basic

Hunter's Mists — With this Gift, the Bastet may summon a thick fog to shroud an area, disorienting trespassers and allowing her to slip through unnoticed. This Gift costs a Gnosis Trait to use and affects an area roughly the size of a large room. Those within the fog (except the Bastet herself, but including her allies) are two Traits down on all vision-related challenges, including most combat challenges. The fog lasts for one scene or until prevailing weather conditions disperse it.

Storm of Pests — As the Bone Gnawer Gift *Scent of Sweet Honey*, except the Balam may attempt to affect an entire group of targets at once. Such attempts are handled using the standard group challenge rules. Otherwise, see *Laws of the Wild*.



Ancestral Wings — Legend states that one of the two races the Balam are descended from had wings, and this Gift allows the Bastet to reclaim her true heritage, if only for a while. The Balam need only spend a Gnosis Trait, and a pair of brightly colored feathered wings spring from her shoulders to carry her aloft; in this state, the Bastet may travel up to six paces per turn in any form, and carry an additional 200 pounds of weight if necessary. This Gift lasts for one scene, at which time the wings atrophy and fall off harmlessly.

Smoking Mirror — As the Intermediate General Gift *Farsight*.

Intermediate

Touch of the Tree-Frog — By spending two Gnosis Traits, the Balam may cause her skin to secrete a powerful paralyzing toxin; those she touches or strikes in brawling combat must win a Static Physical Challenge against seven Traits or freeze in place for a short period of time. If a target does not wish to be touched for any reason, the Balam must win a Physical Challenge. What's more, any enemies who strike the Bastet in brawling combat must win a Simple Test or be forced to resist the poison's effects as well. Those who fail to resist the poison are frozen in place for a number of turns equal to the Balam's current Gnosis Traits (before the Gift was cast); by spending a Willpower Trait, they may attempt to defend themselves, but their movements are painfully slow, and they are at a two-Trait penalty on all such attempts.

Fury of the Sun God — As the General Gift *Spitfire*.

Vision Cloud — As the Theurge Gift *Sight From Beyond*, except this version of the Gift costs one Gnosis Trait and creates a cloud of mystical fog roughly the size of a small room. Anyone within this area of effect (including the Bastet herself and all those without protective breathing gear) will experience visions. Of course, considerate Balam give their Narrators some warning before using this Gift, so that appropriate visions can be prepared.

Jungle's Vengeance — As the Feline Gift *Revolt of the Land*, including the different terrain types it may be used upon. Most Balam start off warning trespassers with minor annoying events, but those that don't get the point are treated to more deadly lessons.

Advanced

Feed the Gods — With this terrifying Gift, the Balam may literally extract an opponent's heart and consume it in a burst of flame. This requires two Gnosis Traits and a Static Gnosis Challenge against seven Traits; success means the victim's heart departs the body in a gruesome burst and flies to the jaguar's hand, where it lights with mystical fire. This whole sequence of events takes two turns to run its course; obviously, those affected by this Gift will die if it is completed. Ordinary mortals have little hope of resisting this terrible power, but savvy foes and supernatural creatures have better odds — each level/Trait of *Fortitude*, *Glamour*, *Spirit* magic, innate magic resistance or armor the victim has adds an additional Trait to the difficulty of the Static



Challenge, making heavily armored or supernaturally potent beings difficult targets indeed. This Gift may only be retested with a Willpower Trait, and the victim may spend a Willpower of his own to "block" such retests in the same manner as blocking Ability retests. This Gift does not function on spirits or other beings who are already dead but is perfectly functional against the undead.

Heal the Wounded Land — As the Metis Gift *Redeem the Waste*.

Bubasti

Basic

Alms to the Poor — By spending a Gnosis Trait, the Bubasti may conjure up small scraps of food or a little bit of money (no bills, silver or gold) to comfort the less fortunate; aside from the altruistic potential of this Gift, more than a few of the shadowcats use it to help maintain a network of grateful street people as informers and confidants. Of course, the shadowcat may also use these "alms" for his own needs, but they taste slightly bitter and leave the palm greasy if misused in this fashion.

Scholar's Friend — Simply put, Bubasti with this Gift may read anything put in front of them, from difficult modern dialects to ancient manuscripts in tongues long lost. This doesn't teach the cat any new languages, nor will it automatically allow him to decipher any puzzles or esoteric concepts contained in the text. This Gift costs one Gnosis Trait and functions for one hour, after which the Bubasti must rest his eyes for a similar amount of time before using it again. Normally this expenditure alone is sufficient, but at the Narrator's discretion, truly obscure languages or astoundingly difficult texts may also require a Static Willpower Challenge.

Mousemaze — This unsettling Gift allows the Bubasti to confuse his target as to the nature of her surroundings, causing her to become lost even in familiar locations and to generally feel uncomfortable and disoriented. The very area itself seems to shift before the target's eyes, becoming looming and menacing, shadows closing in and sounds trailing away into nothingness all around her. The Bubasti must win a Social Challenge to use this Gift; if successful, the target cannot do any sensible traveling or navigating for the next half-hour, and is one Trait down on all Mental Challenges due to distraction and disorientation.

Spirit Ward — Wise Bubasti know when to keep the spirits away from their affairs, and this Gift allows them to create such a barrier, walling off an area from the prying eyes of the chaya. This Gift costs a Gnosis Trait and a variable number of Mental Traits to enact, and creates a barrier no larger than about 30 feet by 30 feet; each Mental Trait spent adds one to the local Gauntlet rating (maximum rating of 10) along the barrier, making it nigh impossible for all but the strongest chaya to penetrate. (Spirits who wish to attack the barrier must make a Rage Challenge against the Gauntlet rating; each success inflicts one level of damage to the barrier, and more than three



levels dispels it completely.) Naturally, spirits dislike this Gift intensely, and since they can often discern its source, the Bubasti had best have a good reason... or a good bribe handy.

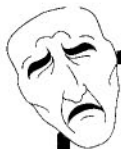
Intermediate

Banish Cahlash's Brood — Calling upon Cahlash, the Bubasti may invoke him to remove one of his children from the area; while powerful spirits are seldom easily gotten rid of, minor elementals and many Banes can be dismissed with little more than a gesture. The Bubasti must spend a Willpower Trait and make a Social Challenge against the spirit's Gnosis to use this Gift; success means that the spirit must depart immediately. Of course, elder spirits and those bound into potent fetishes cannot be banished so easily; doing so may require rituals and even a sacrifice, as dictated by the Spirit Keeper. Likewise, the Narrator may also rule that insignificant spirits require no Trait expenditure to dispel; the mere force of the Bastet's presence is reason enough for them to flee! Since this Gift invokes Cahlash, every time it is used the Bubasti's fur goes a shade darker, and those using the Gift *Sense Wyrms* will detect a faint taint, which grows stronger with every spirit banished. This taint may be purged by undergoing a rigorous quest of atonement without Renown; such quests are best coordinated between the Storyteller and the Spirit Keeper.

Many Tongues of Ptah — As the Homid Gift *Babel's Cure*.

Scarab's Flight — With this bizarre power, the Bubasti may focus his soul into a the form of a small winged insect while his body falls into a deathlike trance. This requires a Gnosis Trait and a Static Mental Challenge against five Traits; success means the insect takes shape and departs unnoticed from the body. The soul can stay separated for up to a number of hours equal to the Bubasti's permanent Gnosis Traits; during this time the body does not decay, but appears to all other forms of detection, magical and otherwise, to have died. If the soul does not return in time, however, the body instantly decays, even if it has been preserved somehow, and the shadowcat must pass on to his next life. Obviously, the insect shape is ideal for fitting into small spaces or spying on conversations; magical senses will detect a bright glow about it, but that is all, and few supernatural creatures think to scan every insect they come across.

Shadowplay — By spending a Gnosis Trait and two Social Traits, the Bubasti may breathe life into his very shadow, creating a duplicate of himself. This duplicate possesses the same Traits and Abilities (but not Gifts) the Bubasti does at the time it is created, and will perform any action the shadowcat wills it to, including combat. This direction is telepathic, instantaneous and cannot be disrupted by any known means. The duplicate cannot travel more than a dozen paces from the shadowcat, however, and this Gift lasts for up to a number of turns or minutes equal to the Bubasti's combined Gnosis + Willpower total, at which time the duplicate fades away. No more than one duplicate can be created at a time, and the Bubasti must wait at least one scene before creating another. This Gift requires an actual shadow be



present for the duplicate to be created; due to the independent nature of their actions, a duplicate is best handled by a Narrator to avoid confusion, although a prop card can work as well.

Note: Some Bubasti who created a number of duplicates in a short a time have reported that their shadows became less and less cooperative. Some cats who called the shadows too often have never been seen again.

Advanced

Deny the Hungry — As the Homid Gift.

Spirit Wall — Bubasti with this power may coalesce and reform minor spirits in the area into a wailing Umbral wall, which blocks all but the mightiest of spirits and otherwise creates an impassable Umbral barrier. The Bubasti must spend two Gnosis Traits and make a Static Social Challenge against seven Traits; success means that in two turns (the time required to call and shape the spirits) the wall will be imposed. Failure means the spirits are unmoved, furious and likely to take revenge on the Bubasti for even attempting such an act. While the wall is in effect, all spirits are blocked and the Gauntlet is raised to 10 Traits. The wall lasts for one turn per permanent Willpower Trait the Bubasti possesses. The wall can be any shape and size the cat requires, up to the size of a small building; use common sense when determining any boundaries, but bear in mind the powerful nature of this Gift when adjudicating such decisions. Spirits *despise* being used in this fashion, and Bubasti who use it had either be powerful enough that they can deter reprisal or fast enough to escape the *chaya* they have angered!

Ceilican

Basic

Laughing Last — As the Intermediate General Gift *Cheshire Prank*, except the faerie cats may also disappear in Homid and Sokto forms. The normal restriction on shapeshifting from those forms while invisible still applies.

Satyr's Wisdom — Calling on the talents of her faerie ancestry, the Ceilican can capably sing, act or play any musical instrument, even if she's never stepped onto the stage or held the instrument before. The Bastet may spend a number of Mental Traits; each Trait spent converts to two temporary levels of the *Performance* or *Expression* Ability. These temporary levels last only as long as the cat is actually playing or performing — as soon as she stops, the levels vanish. These extra levels cannot take the Bastet over five levels in an Ability, although the Gift may certainly be reused during the performance if the faerie cat needs a quick infusion of talent.

Banish Burning — This Gift is designed to ensure that the atrocities of the Burning Times are never committed again. With the expenditure of a Willpower Trait, the Ceilican becomes immune to all nonmagical fires for the rest of the scene and ignores the first level of damage taken from all magical



fires as well. Note that the Ceilican is not immune to smoke inhalation, oxygen deprivation or falling debris, only the fire itself.

Sorcerer's Blade — With this Gift, the Ceilican can enchant a weapon to injure supernatural creatures, making even a humble knife or sling a fearsome weapon. The faerie cat must actually have the weapon in her hands to use this Gift, and she must spend a Gnosis Trait — after that, the weapon inflicts aggravated damage on all supernatural creatures for the rest of the session or until the next sunrise (whichever comes first). Although bullets, arrows and the like can be enchanted in this fashion, each such missile must be Gifted separately; while arrows may sometimes be reused, bullets cannot be. Note: Weapons enchanted in this fashion cannot be passed around to the Bastet's companions; for anyone but the original Ceilican, they are normal weapons. (This Gift is not intended to create a one-cat arms race!)

Intermediate

Possum's Book — As the Fianna Gift *Faerie Kin*; see *Laws of the Wild*. In addition, the Ceilican may attempt to determine if a target is a changeling with a successful Mental Challenge; this ability becomes reflexive once this Gift is learned. Finally, by spending two Mental Traits the Bastet may perceive and interact normally with the chimerical world of the faerie folk for a scene — although she receives no protection from it. (For those of you with **The Shining Host**, Ceilican using this last power count as enchanted beings for the scene, though since they are "self-enchanted" the Mists do not apply when this enchantment fades; the faerie cats retain all of their memories unless chimerically slain or otherwise harassed.)

Phantasm — This Gift allows the Ceilican to conjure up majestic nonsense to amuse allies and terrify enemies, creating complex illusions that appeal to the five senses. The Ceilican may attempt to create whatever she desires, but no matter what the illusion may be, she must spend a Willpower Trait and make a Static Social Challenge to call it into being; the difficulty of this challenge depends on the complexity of the illusion, with simple monosensory illusions being two Traits, illusions appealing to three senses being four Traits, and illusions invoking all five senses being six Traits. Movement adds two Traits to the difficulty, as does interaction with the environment. Illusions created with this Gift last for the remainder of the scene or until the cat dismisses them. They may occupy up to roughly a 10-square-foot space, but they have no solid form. They also cannot harm anyone, although observers might be harmed by their confused perceptions (such as by attempting to walk onto an illusionary bridge); those attempting to disbelieve in the illusion must defeat the Bastet in a Mental Challenge; those with *Heightened Senses* or similar powers receive a free retest on such challenges. Characters must have a valid reason to attempt disbelief, although anyone who directly comes in contact with the illusion (such as trying to open a illusory door or lean on an illusory wall) automatically receives a test to disbelieve. While maintaining the illusion, the Ceilican is at a one-Trait penalty to all other challenges due to the concentration involved.



Monkey's Uncle — As the Homicide Gift.

Small Cousin — Also known as Blofeld's Cat to those Ceilican steeped in human culture, this subtly powerful Gift allows the Bastet to assume the form of a common housecat. While physically limiting (the Bastet may not speak, and can have no more than three Physical Traits), this form is extremely unobtrusive, making it ideal for spying and otherwise passing unnoticed. More than one Ceilican has swallowed their pride long enough to adopt the disguise of "Patches" or "Mittens" in order to infiltrate the house of their enemy (or escape from it, for that matter), and the things mere "pets" are allowed to overhear are often well worth the humiliation of a few nights with a litter box. While in housecat form, the Ceilican retains her Mental and Social Traits, and may use any Gift that her feline shape allows. Furthermore, only magical senses have any chance of discerning that the Bastet is anything other than a normal cat, and the Ceilican receives a free retest on all such challenges. Note that very few supernatural creatures routinely scan every passing cat in the first place, no matter how paranoid they may usually be, and are even less likely to bother expending the effort if the Ceilican appears to be no more than their beloved Fluffy.

Advanced

Chariot of Lions — A Ceilican using this Gift may spend three Gnosis Traits to conjure up from thin air a shining golden chariot drawn by giant cats, which may then carry her and one passenger. The cats pulling the chariot can run as fast as the average car and may even be urged into flight for a short time — the chariot may fly for two turns or six seconds per Willpower Trait the Ceilican spends. The chariot lasts for one scene or hour, whichever is longer, at which time it disappears again in a puff of smoke. Obviously, this Gift makes for an excellent if less-than-subtle method of obtaining a Fair Escape, since few opponents indeed can keep up with the speeds the chariot reaches. The chariot itself and the cats pulling it are immune to all known means of attack, although the Ceilican and her passenger are still vulnerable to any attacks that can normally affect a fleeing opponent.

Madness of Crowds — Indulging in the dark side of her nature, the Ceilican can take control of a mob of mortals and direct them to her will, causing orgies or riots to break out at her whim. This Gift can also be used to calm an excited crowd, though it is generally easier to start trouble than stop it. The Ceilican must caper around the area, spend a Willpower Trait and make a Social Challenge against the people she wishes to affect; obviously, Mob Scene rules apply in most uses of this Gift, though targets receive no additional Traits for outnumbering the faerie cat. If attempting to calm a disturbance, the Ceilican is two Traits down on the Social Challenge. This Gift affects an area up to the size of a nightclub or large conference room; normal mortals are powerless to retest this Gift's use, although mortals with supernatural lineage, Numina or other special powers (i.e., mortal player characters) may spend a Willpower Trait to retest it. Supernatural creatures may also spend a Willpower Trait to ignore this Gift's use entirely. This Gift's



effects last for one scene or hour, whichever comes first, and the madness is out of the cat's control once set in motion.

Khan

Basic

Rhino's Favor — By spending a Gnosis Trait, the Khan may grow a temporary horn from his forehead, allowing him an extra bit of natural weaponry in a pinch. The horn grants the Khan two bonus Traits when attacking, like a normal weapon, and has the Negative Physical Trait *Painful*. The horn retracts harmlessly into the skull at the end of the scene.

Skin of Jade — Invoking his bond to the elements and spending a Gnosis Trait, the Khan may harden his skin to the toughness of jade, granting him additional protection. All bashing damage is halved, round down (minimum one level of damage inflicted), and the Khan gains an additional health level; these benefits last for one scene. If only the extra health level is lost during the scene, the Khan is unharmed when this power wears off. This power may only be used once per scene.

Heart of Fury — As the Ahroun Gift *Stoking Fury's Furnace*; see *Laws of the Wild*. In addition, due to his martial discipline the Khan may choose to double his Traits on all tests to resist frenzy for one scene, although at the end of the scene, the stresses endured boil over, and he must make a normal frenzy check to retain control.

Ricepaper Walk — As the Stargazer Gift *Surface Attunement*; see *Laws of the Wild*.

Intermediate

Maker's Charm — As the Homid Gift *Craft of the Maker*.

Paws of the Raging Spirit Tiger — With this fearsome power the Khan may surround his claws with crackling spirit energy, allowing him to strike opponents across the Gauntlet without actually crossing it himself, so long as he can see them. This Gift costs a Gnosis Trait and lasts for six turns; it may be used any number of times in a scene, however.

Asuras' Bane — As the Bubasti Gift *Banish Cahlash's Brood*, except the tigers channel Rahjah to banish corruption instead of invoking Cahlash, so no spiritual taint is gained. A Khan's pelt turns more and more white when this Gift is used, so snow white tigers are accorded great respect as demon hunters.

Dragonroar — As the General Gift *Spitfire*, except the blast inflicts a number of health levels of damage equal to the Khan's current (not permanent) Gnosis Traits, and those struck with it will continue to burn for two more turns unless sudden and drastic measures are taken to douse the flames. On the second turn, the fire inflicts half its original damage (round up), and on the third turn it inflicts a final level of damage before going out. Flammable items will also be ignited by this Gift, and any fires caused by it must be put out normally.



Advanced

Call to Battle — As the Ahroun Gift *Strength of Will*; see *Laws of the Wild*.

Thousand-Thunder Strike — Khan are some of the most fearsome devil fighters in the world, and this Gift shows why — by clapping his hands together and spending two Gnosis Traits, the Khan creates a spiritual/physical shock wave that rends Asura and other Bane-spirits, as well as levels those structures the Khan considers unclean. For each permanent Rage and Willpower Trait the Khan possesses, any Banes or other spawn of Cahlash within 200 feet suffer three points worth of Power damage, no matter which side of the Gauntlet they're on; the strike may damage or even destroy any buildings the Khan targets, at the Narrator's discretion. The wave lasts only a moment or so, but can be felt up to a mile away.

Pumonca

Basic

Mockingbird's Mirror — The simple trick of mimicry allows the Pumonca to throw his voice anywhere and even imitate various sounds: people, machines, animals, etc. This Gift allows the cougar to mimic sounds for the duration of the scene; to fool someone, the Bastet must defeat them in a Social Challenge. If attempting to mimic a sound outside the normal vocal range, the Pumonca must also spend one Gnosis Trait.

Raincalling — Calling upon beneficent winds and storms, the Pumonca can draw out rain for crops or cool off on a hot day. The cougar must spend a Gnosis Trait and make a Static Social Challenge (six-Trait difficulty for a blustery, cloudy day; 15 Traits for clear, cloudless and utterly dry weather). Success means a small pocket of clouds forms and a shower comes down for about 10 minutes or the duration of one conflict. This does not cause any injury, but can put out some fires and cool off characters.

Stonework — As per General Gift *Craft of the Maker*, except it only works on stone, dirt or clay, and its effects are permanent.

Wanderer's Boon — This Gift is a necessity for the long-traveling Pumonca. The hardened traveler ignores seasons, climate, hunger and thirst. With the expenditure of a Willpower Trait, the cougar may ignore all of the negative effects of hunger, thirst or temperature (choose one) for the entire session.

Intermediate

Bayou Shambler — The swamps of the Southern wetlands are home to many mysterious legends, and a proper swamp cat knows them all. Pumonca with this Gift can call out a swamp elemental (a conglomeration of plants, vines and ooze) by crooning to the spirits in the swamp. This requires a Rage Trait and a Gnosis Trait to be spent (probably in successive turns, since they may not be spent in the same turn) and a Simple Test. On a win or a tie, a foul-smelling morass of animate swampy mass that is favorably inclined to the Pumonca appears. Swamp elementals have the Traits *Brawny* x 2, *Rugged* x 2,



Tireless x 2 and *Tough* x 2, a normal health level chart (though it suffers no wound penalties), and one level of each of *Brawl* and *Stealth* Abilities. The creature remains for up to five turns, then rejoins the swamp.

Element-Folk Favor — With the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait and a successful Social Challenge (difficulty of the Gauntlet), the Pumonca can summon up an elemental spirit for aid. See the elemental spirits in *Laws of the Wild*, under *Elemental Gift*. Only Pumonca can use this Gift; other Bastet who swipe this Gift's secrets and attempt to use it are immediately attacked by the angry elemental. The elemental remains for one scene, one hour or one task (whichever comes first).

Hungry Earth — Rousing the ire of Mother Gaia, the Pumonca causes the earth to tremble and crack. The cougar must spend a Rage Trait and make a Social Challenge with a difficulty equal to *twice* the area's Gauntlet. If successful, a natural disaster befalls everyone within 100 feet — swamps beget quicksand, mountains suffer rockslides, snowcaps suffer avalanches, deserts and plains crack open and swallow offenders. Everyone in the area takes one health level of damage automatically (so this Gift probably injures just about everyone in play, save the Pumonca himself) and must deal with the disaster's other effects as well.

Thunderbolt — From a pact with Thunderbird, the Pumonca can call a stroke of the storm out of the sky. Any cloud, however small, can serve as a source for this power. The Bastet must spend a Rage Trait and make a Physical Challenge to hit the target; success causes the victim to be struck by lightning, scoring one level of aggravated damage for ever two Traits of permanent Gnosis that the Pumonca possesses (round down).

Advanced

Earthspeaking — Whispering to the rocks in their own tongue, the Pumonca can discern what has passed on the earth before. The Pumonca must spend a Mental Trait to see into the past; doing so grants a vision or impression of events that happened there before, much like the vampiric power of *Spirit's Touch* or mortal *Psychometry*. However, the vision is quite vivid and includes many components of sight and sound, not just emotional sensation. Ask a Narrator for details; cats who use this Gift too often may find themselves subject to unwanted emotional problems or derangements from the recurring intensity of past events.

Thunderbird's Cry — As the Metis Gift *Wrath of Nala*.

Qualmi

Basic

Breakfast of Stones — As the Pumonca Gift *Wanderer's Boon*.

Turned Fur — As the Wendigo Gift *Camouflage*; see *Laws of the Wild*.

No Hidden Thing — As the General Gifts *Cat Sight*, *Pathfinder's Pride*, *Sense Magic*, *Sense the Truth*, *Sense the Unmaker's Hand* and *Spirit's Sight*. It's really hard to hide things from a lynx! This Gift costs a Gnosis Trait to use,



in addition to any challenges that those Gifts normally require, but remains in effect for the entire scene.

Wind from the West — As the Bubasti Gift *Mousemaze*, except the Qualmi must ask her target a riddle (or series of riddles), and the target's confused perceptions come from trying to decipher the riddles. If the target correctly answers the riddles, the Gift's power is canceled. Obviously, if the Qualmi player knows one or more riddles, this is a great help to roleplaying this Gift correctly, but it is by no means required for the Gift to work. Likewise, players who aren't particularly talented at wordplay but whose characters have several levels of *Enigmas* can make a Mental Challenge to try to cancel this Gift's power, as their characters guess the correct solution. Most Qualmi are impressed by those with quick enough wits to defeat them and can be very generous losers in such circumstances.

Intermediate

Drop of Sea — As the Homid Gift *Monkey's Uncle* and the Swara Gift *All Beasts Under the Sun*, with the following changes — the Gift requires a Static Social Challenge to activate, the animal forms can range from rabbit-sized to bear-sized, and any observer who defeats the lynx in a Mental Challenge can see her for what she really is. Particularly savvy opponents may ask the lynx a riddle; if she cannot answer it, she must revert to her old form immediately.

Nighttime Web — As the General Gift *Cheshire Prank*, except the Qualmi may use it in any form and it does not require a grin. They are still prohibited from shapeshifting once invisible, however.

Dancing on Air — As the Metis Gift *Moon's Gateway*.

Still Breeze Blowing — As the Lupus Gift *Elemental Gift*; see *Laws of the Wild*.

Advanced

Call Down the Stars — Sometimes the best answer to a riddle is in fact force, and when it comes to disrupting the machines of the invaders, the Qualmi have no problem spreading a little chaos. By winning a Static Mental Challenge against seven Traits and spending a Willpower Trait, the Qualmi may confuse the spirits inside machinery with a staggering riddle, causing their power source — be it gas, coal, wood, electricity, whatever — to ignite. The resulting explosion usually does the machine itself in and may even harm those around it as well. Small power sources explode for one or two levels of damage, while larger ones such as a car's gas tank or a steam train furnace inflict as much as four levels of damage. Note that some combustion must be involved — a canister of gasoline will not explode on its own. Although theoretically possible, no Qualmi has ever dared to use this Gift on a nuclear power source, as the results would likely poison the entire land.

Water's Vision — Water links all things together, and by learning to see as water does, the Qualmi may look through barriers as if they did not exist. Walls, vaults, the Gauntlet — it makes no difference to this Gift. The Qualmi



must win a Static Mental Challenge against the local Gauntlet, but if successful, she may see through all objects in her path, even living bodies, allowing her to spy on distant or hidden events as if nothing blocked her vision. This Gift extends up to a maximum range of 100 feet per permanent Gnosis Trait the lynx possesses (though in most games such distances will seldom be encountered), and ends at ground level, although cellars and other subterranean structures may be seen if the Qualmi's vision extends far enough. This power lasts for one scene.

Simba

Basic

Majesty — As the General Gift *Command Attention*, except its benefits last for a whole scene. Simba are immune to this version of the Gift's effects.

Submit — As the Philodox Gift *Roll Over*, except it only applies when giving commands (not for warding off attacks) and costs the Simba a Gnosis Trait per command given. In addition, this Gift does not necessarily change the target's mind, but it can compel his *body* into following orders, whether he likes it or not. Commands given with this Gift cannot be obviously suicidal, cause the target to attack close friends/allies, violate the target's Nature, or take more than 10 minutes to perform. Simba are immune to this Gift when it is used by one of their own. For other details, see *Laws of the Wild*.

Armor of Kings — As the Children of Gaia Gift *Luna's Armor*; see *Laws of the Wild*.

Rallying Challenge — As the Bagheera Gift *Ojas Surge*, except it can only enhance Physical Traits or charisma-related Social Traits, can only be done once per scene, and requires one turn and a mighty roar to activate.

Intermediate

Bountiful Dominion — As the Metis Gift *Redeem the Waste*, except it doubles all crop growth within the area of effect, purifies water immediately, and costs an additional Gnosis Trait on top of what it would normally cost to clean the area. For example, using the regular version of this Gift costs two Gnosis Traits to purify a square mile of land; using the Simba version, the effects are more dramatic but the total cost is three Gnosis Traits instead.

Fireroar — As the Khan Gift *Dragonroar*.

King of the Beasts — As the Philodox Gift of the same name, except it affects any animal nearby that the Simba chooses to call, save supernatural beings in animal form. (There's a reason the lions rule the animal kingdom!) Otherwise, see *Laws of the Wild*.

Shadow the Moon's Light — Nocturnal predators that they are, the Simba have learned a few tricks to bring the night with them as they hunt; this one allows them to dim the lights in the area to a very low level — no problem for the Bastet's own sharp senses, but a real problem for those with less



sophisticated vision. With a Static Social Challenge, the Simba may dim all the lights in the area to near darkness; already dim light sources are smothered entirely. The difficulty of the challenge depends on the lights to be extinguished — light on the level of moonlight or headlights is seven Traits, while powerful light sources such as halogen lights or sunlight are 10 Traits. Those in the affected area who do not have some means of seeing in the dark suffer a one-Trait penalty on all combat- and vision-related challenges. This Gift does not actually extinguish the lights — torches and candles remain lit and can still burn those handling them, for example — but it does dim them to a point where they might as well be out. This Gift lasts for one turn per permanent Social Trait the Bastet possesses.

Advanced

Command the Multitude — As the Basic Gift *Submit*, except it affects everyone in line of sight and requires a Gnosis Trait to activate. Normal mortals or animals cannot resist the Gift without expending a Willpower Trait. Against most crowds (i.e., those composed of at least a few supernatural opponents), this Gift requires a typical mob scene challenge, with those who resist successfully remaining unaffected by the Simba's authority. Strong-willed crowds may require expenditures of further Gnosis, at Storyteller discretion.

Rising Sun — Legend states that the lion carries the sun within his heart, and this Gift is proof that this old myth has some truth to it. By spending two Gnosis Traits, the Simba may cause the very earth and rocks themselves to glow with a blinding light; this light is not the same as true sunlight, but still burns those vulnerable to such damage. On the first turn, this light inflicts one aggravated health level of damage to any vampires or other creatures in the area; each successive turn inflicts another level of damage, cumulatively. Thus on the second turn those in the area suffer two levels of aggravated damage, on the third turn three levels of damage, etc. This damage can be resisted with Fortitude (the vampire wins all ties on such tests, due to the fact that this isn't actually true sunlight), but the only other defense is to flee the area. Finally, any creatures with sensitive vision may be blinded by the light after the second turn unless they take care to shield their eyes. This Gift lasts for six turns, at which time the glow fades away. This Gift can only be used on natural earth and stone; outdoor settings are fine, but the inside of a marble crypt wouldn't count.

Swara

Basic

Diamond Claws — As the General Gift *Razor Claws*.

Impala's Flight — As the General Gift. Where the Swara are concerned, such bursts of speed are even more impressive than normal.



Walking Between Worlds — As the General Gift. The fact that this power is so common among the Swara is a closely guarded tribal secret, and they will go to great lengths to keep it that way.

Weight of a Heart — With a successful Social Challenge, the Swara may alter another's mood, changing sorrow to serenity, anger to indifference, and so on. Truly radical shifts — from murderous anger to giddy happiness, for example — require a Gnosis Trait be spent as well. These altered moods last for the rest of the scene and inflict no damage — indeed, these emotions seem perfectly natural to the target (who resists attempts to point out this sudden mood swing).

Intermediate

Clearwater Passage — With this Gift, the Swara may transform herself into liquid, allowing her to squeeze or soak through most barriers and reform on the other side. This Gift costs a Gnosis Trait and a Physical Trait to enact, but the Swara is immune to all normal attacks save fire (which inflicts the usual aggravated damage) while in the liquid state; she may reform at any time, although transforming to liquid again requires the Gift be activated once more. If she's been "absorbed" while in this watery state, the Swara bursts forth from the material when she turns back to solid form. Any being foolish enough to swallow the cheetah in this form automatically takes a level of aggravated damage when she reforms, then vomits her up in a rather spectacularly disgusting manner.

Dance of the Chaya — Offering her skin to the spirits, the Swara may effectively take on a controlled, temporary possession, granting her a measure of a spirit's power in return for allowing it to play in the living world for a while. Smart cheetahs take a look around the local Umbra and call a spirit before using this Gift, lest a malevolent entity take residence instead; once a spirit has been chosen, the Swara must make a Static Social Challenge against seven Traits. Failure means the possession either fails to take hold, or even worse — in the case of especially powerful or wicked spirits — that the cheetah is totally taken over by the spirit for the rest of the scene, and should be played by a Narrator during this time. If successful, however, the Swara gains some of the spirit's powers for two turns per permanent Gnosis Traits she has; these powers depend on the type of spirit that takes hold, and the Swara should work with the Spirit Keeper to determine exactly what powers a given spirit grants, as well as any costs or challenges related to their use. Spirit Keepers are encouraged to base these "gifts" on any Charms or other powers the spirit possesses — a butterfly spirit might grant beauty or flight, while a rhino would boost toughness and strength, etc. Above all, this exchange should be roleplayed; spirits are fickle folk and do not grant such favors lightly.

Ghost Caress — Using old principles of sympathetic magic, the Swara may take an item filled with the essence of her target — a piece of clothing, a prized possession, a lock of hair, etc. — and use it to pass along pain or pleasure to the target as she desires. The Swara must spend a Willpower Trait and make a Static Gnosis Challenge against four Traits to use this Gift;



success means she may perform a number of actions equal to her permanent Gnosis Traits on the item, thus transferring those sensations to her target. Once those actions are used up, the Gift ends. This Gift cannot actually harm the target; it may transfer the *feeling* of a kick to the shin, but the target doesn't actually suffer pain, although the Narrator may rule that extreme pain (or pleasure!) may force the subject to act at a one-Trait penalty on the next turn due to distraction from such phantom sensations. Likewise, it cannot move the target at all; lifting an action figure made to look like the vampire prince doesn't mean you can actually toss him around like a doll!

Racing the Wind — As the Silent Strider Gift *Speed Beyond Thought*; see **Laws of the Wild**. This results in truly astounding speed — remember, these are cheetahs we're talking about!

Advanced

All Beasts Under the Sun — As the Black Fury Gift *The Thousand Forms of Gaia*; see **Laws of the Wild**.

Judgment of Pestilence — As the Feline Gift.

Rites

The Ties of Seline

Although many other changers perceive the Bastet as solitary souls with little use for community, this is far from the truth — while most cats do not feel the same call for constant companions as Garou, meetings and traditions are still very important to the werecats. At their taghairs, the Bastet exchange stories, grant (or remove) Renown, pass on items of power, summon spirits, settle matters of honor and otherwise enforce the bonds that keep Bastet society together. Indeed, if the cats tend to be solitary apart from such gatherings, it only serves to reinforce how serious these meetings must be for such independent souls as werecats to come together for them. Even those rites intended to be used by a single Bastet are performed with a sense of the ancient traditions and responsibilities associated with them, and woe to the werecat who believes that she may ignore the respect and decorum of the rite she is performing because she's alone.

Spirits play an important part in the lives of Bastet as well, and since most of them cannot cross the Gauntlet on their own, these rites often serve as their only sure way of communicating to the invisible realm. Thus are ancestors appeased, word of Renown spread, new Gifts learned, Jamaks gained and bartered with and so on. Without these rites, the bonds between the Bastet and their spirit allies would quickly wither away, a state not even the most devout servant of the Unmaker would wish on their fellow cats. By performing the appropriate rites at the appropriate times, not only does a Bastet keep up good relations with her fellow cats, but with the all-important denizens of the spirit world as well. Being a werecat is more than just a graceful manner of living, after all, but a cat without such poise is a poor cat indeed.



Bastet recognize four types of rites: Kuasha Rites, Moon Rites, Need Rites and Taghairm Rites. Unlike their Garou cousins, most Bastet learn a wide smattering of rites in their time, and treasure those among them who take the time to study such traditions as living links to their past. Otherwise, see *Laws of the Wild* for details on how to create and run rites in play, but ignore the number of participants required except as specifically noted: solitary creatures that they are, most Bastet use rites that rely on one cat alone.

Kuasha Rites

These rites deal with the First Year, from choosing a kit to assuming the mantle of teacher oneself. While they offer little in the way of "game benefit," they are essential to the lives of new Bastet and often some of the most memorable times in a cat's life, and should be treated accordingly.

Basic

Speaking of the Name: Names hold great power for the Bastet; therefore all First Year cats choose new names, reflecting the great changes they've gone through. Different tribes mark this ceremony in different ways, from tattoos and jewelry to vigorous hunts and elaborate parties, but the essential function is the same. Both kuasha and Tekhmet are required, and the rite should have some deep personal significance for the kit; after all, this is the proverbial point of no return, when one's old life is set aside and the responsibilities of being Bastet are acknowledged. Make it memorable.

Rite of Recognition: Before being accepted to a new Rank, the Bastet must perform this rite; like many werecat rituals, this rite can be performed by a solitary cat, and often is. The werecat must stand within a prepared circle — preferably one decorated with trophies associated with her Renown — and list her accomplishments to either her fellow Bastet (at a taghairm) or the spirits themselves (if alone). In addition to the usual rite challenges, the Bastet must make a Social Challenge as well — cats respect those who make a good impression! Ability retests are possible on this test, depending on the case the cat is trying to make and the audience she's facing — Qualmi typically use the riddles of the *Enigmas* Ability to prove their worth, Bubasti their grasp of *Occult* lore and so on. At the Narrator's discretion, the new Rank may be conferred even if the Social Challenge fails, but this typically occurs only when the Bastet has committed deeds of truly undeniable merit and courage; messing up a few phrases won't stand in the way of a cat who's managed to achieve legendary deeds, but it makes all the difference for those of less-certain accomplishment. If accepted, the new Rank is conferred (spirits carry word of a solitary cat's deeds); if not, the petitioner is told why and dismissed. In no event can this rite be performed more than once per season, successful or not.

Passing of the Yava: This most sacred of ceremonies represents the end of the First Year as well as the ultimate act of trust between teacher and student — the passing on of the three greatest secrets of the tribe. After scanning the area for spirits and other eavesdroppers, the kuasha imparts the secrets, reminds the kit of their importance and admonishes her to keep them



safe at all costs. Divulging the Yava, even under the most extreme torture, is considered betrayal of the entire tribe, and those who do it are punished without remorse or pity. The lesson of the Ceilican is clear; outsiders with knowledge of the Yava can wipe out a tribe. Those who would divulge such secrets are unworthy of the title of Bastet. After the ceremony ends, the two part company; while they may remain friends, the First Year has ended, and the kit is on his own.

Overlapping Rites

There are some rites which function essentially the same ways as certain Garou rites; these are reprinted here. Players and Spirit Keepers should take special care to make up entirely new rituals and oaths for these rites in order to give them the proper Bastet flavor, but in all other respects (including any Trait costs and time required to perform them) they are the same as the rites presented in *Laws of the Wild*.

Kuasha: *Dedication Rite (Rite of Talisman Dedication), Rite of Contrition*

Moon: *Bind the Spirit-Fetish (Rite of the Fetish), Rite of Summoning, Rouse the Sleeping Spirit (Rite of Spirit Awakening)*

Need: *Rite of Cleansing, Rite of the Opened Bridge*

Taghairm: *Festival of Flowers (Gathering for the Departed)*

Intermediate

Kuasha Degree: With this rite, the student learns how to become a kuasha and take on pupils of her own. Most teachers caution their students to run wild and see the world a bit before assuming the responsibility of teaching a kit of their own, but some Tekhmet prove themselves capable of learning this rite by the end of their own First Year. This rite imparts knowledge of how to locate taghairms, petition spirits, locate newly Changed Bastet and punish them if they do something wrong, as well as a host of common wisdom concerning proper care and feeding of the kit. It also formally empowers the Bastet to assume the responsibilities of the kuasha position; while cats can teach kits without this rite, it is highly frowned upon, and most irresponsible souls who attempt such training are relieved of their responsibilities by wiser Bastet.

Moon Rites

These rites are mystic rituals enacted by the werewolves to honor their mother Seline and offer the Bastet a much-needed magical edge in their solitary lives.



Basic

Rite of Warding: This simple but highly useful rite is often performed before taghairms to ensure that outsiders do not spy on the proceedings. The Bastet must make the typical rite challenge and spend a Gnosis Trait; this rite lasts for a number of hours equal to her permanent Gnosis rating, or until the Bastet dismisses her guards or the gathering ends (whichever comes first). The Bastet is automatically aware of anyone who enters the area of protection; she will not know exactly who or what might have entered, but will know that *something's* wrong. Even spirits cannot enter the area without alerting the ritemaster. Most mortals will also instinctively avoid the warded area without knowing why, preventing most normal intrusions. Those with some form of supernatural concealment must defeat the ritemaster in a Mental Challenge at a two-Trait penalty. Success, however, means they may pass through undetected as they please.

Intermediate

Rite of Claiming: A rite that is seen more and more rarely in these dark days, this ritual marks the founding or transferal of a Den-Realm. In addition to the standard rite requirements, the Bastet must mark the boundaries of his territory and speak oaths of protection and dedication. Until this rite is performed, the land is just another hunting ground, no matter how powerful the Den-Realm might be. Den-Realms also change hands from time to time: Upstarts may seize Den-Realms from dying elders or friends might pass them on to allies for safekeeping, but in no case can a Bastet have more than one Den-Realm at a time. Until he dies, the land is part of the cat and few indeed would give that kind of bond up without a deadly fight. See the rules for Den-Realms on page 161 for more details on the powers, duties and limitations regarding Den-Realms.

Eater of the Dead: This sinister Bubasti rite is reserved for the greatest of traitors, and whispers of its tortures around taghairm fires have helped keep many of the shadowcats' secrets over the ages. The offender is subdued, slain and mummified in a specific manner by fellow Bubasti; upon this death, the cat's spirit is sent to the mazelike tunnels of Sobk, judge of the dead. No manner of Gift or other magic can stay Sobk's hand, and if the offender's soul is found wanting, she is devoured forever. If the punishment endured so far is considered enough, on the other hand, the Bubasti's soul is free to take its final journey. This rite requires the gruesome preparations outlined above in addition to the normal challenges; finally, a Gnosis Trait from each of the Bubasti involved "seals" the magic. Those devoured by Sobk are truly lost forever and cannot be contacted or returned by any means. Only Bubasti ever learn this rite; others who have tried have invariably disappeared....

Note: As dramatic as this rite is, remember that all the rules of *Mind's Eye Theatre* still apply; those wanting to actually attempt mummification should be courteously shown the door.



Advanced

Call the Four Winds: With this powerful rite, a pride of Bastet may calm or call up almost any kind of weather imaginable; while the process is more demanding and offers less immediate results than similar effects generated by Gifts, it makes up for those shortcomings with the subtlety of such changes and creates true weather patterns that must run their natural course before dispersing. Unlike most Bastet rites, this rite requires at least five werecats; any fewer and the fierce energies conjured up are turned against the cats themselves, often with fatal results. Otherwise, the exact effects and difficulties of this rite are entirely up to the Storyteller, who must weigh the type of weather being called, the local climate and (most importantly) the demands of the story. Powerful or unseasonable weather patterns should be correspondingly difficult and require at least an hour or more of time to conjure up, while more typical weather or calming moderate storms should be easier. Once created, weather must run its normal course; those who wish to dismiss the forces they have invoked must use this rite again.

Rite of Nine Lives: This rarest of Gifts, granted by Seline herself to the wisest and worthiest of her children, allows the cat to literally return from the dead as many as eight times before her spirits leaves for good. This rite requires two Gnosis Traits to enact and may only be performed once in a Bastet's lifetime — what's more, the cat will only really know whether it has worked when her first "death" comes. (If at all possible, the Storyteller should employ a third party or otherwise keep the outcome of this rite secret from the player in order to maintain proper dramatic tension.) If it does succeed, however, the Bastet's spirit remains in her body and wills it to recover, which may take some time depending on how nasty her demise was. Such recovery is complete and leaves no physical scars, although most deaths may certainly create some emotional or psychological scars. As for the amount of time recovery takes, a cat who was "merely" shot will return in a day or two, while a week or two is required for one who died of a long fall, and one who was drawn and quartered is in a for a truly long and painful experience before she returns. She *will* return, however, and usually has some serious scores to settle when she does!

Of course, some things can still kill the Bastet, no matter how powerful a magic she invokes. Since the cat truly returns to life in all senses of the word, some deaths (such as entombment) may kill a cat a second time before she can escape. Beginning with the first, every other "death" reduces the Bastet's permanent Gnosis, Rage and Willpower Trait ratings by one; these points cannot be regained, so a Bastet who has died six times has a maximum number of seven Gnosis Traits, for example. What's more, the following methods cancel out even this Gift's powerful magic:

- Total destruction of the body (cremation, dissolution in acid or toxic waste, wood-chipper shredding, etc.)
- Natural death by old age.
- Death in some outer Realm (the Deep Umbra, a Horizon Realm, Arcadia, etc.)



- Imprisonment of the soul (through some forms of magic, or through soul-pacts or annihilation)
- The vampiric Embrace.

Rites of Need

Created by the individualistic cats to weather hard times, these rites may not be pretty, but any embarrassment is more than compensated for by their power and usefulness.

Basic

Jamak Promise Bond: This rite represents one of the first steps a Bastet takes in dealing with the spirit world and creates a deep bond between her and the Jamak who agrees to enter into this rite with her. Although this rite has no actual mystical power, it is considered a formal oath by both parties, and breaking its terms is an act of great shame, even possible Rank loss. While the words of oaths vary, and players are encouraged to come up with unique ceremonies that emphasize their Bastet and the spirits they have chosen, the essential promises are the same: to help when possible, to be truthful always, to respect and to trust. Both sides also agree to protect (or refrain from harming) the other's loved ones and to meet once in a while to share secrets and good times. It also lowers the Gauntlet long enough for a handshake or a kiss, and decreases the difficulty by one should either party choose to cross over. It should be noted that while a Bastet may have any number of spirit allies, she may only have one Jamak at a time.

Intermediate

Rite of Fear: A sinister rite from ages past, this ritual has found new use in the modern age, where savvy cats use it to strike fear and discord into the hearts of their enemies, often as prelude to a devastating strike of their own. The sun must have fled the sky and the Bastet must be in his Crinos form to enact this rite, and two Rage Traits are required in addition to the normal rite tests. Each additional Bastet involved in the rite adds a Trait to the ritemaster's total in the event of ties or overbids. If successful, this rite creates a cloud of panic and nightmares that spreads over a wide area for a night and a day; the results of such manipulation are primarily narrative and largely up to the Storyteller, who is encouraged to make them as atmospheric and ominous as possible. If some quick mechanics are needed, however, all those within the area must make a Static Willpower Challenge against the ritemaster's permanent Rage rating to avoid acting irrationally during the rite's duration. Supernatural creatures are immune to such drastic effects but will feel distinctly ill at ease and recognize some sort of supernatural force at work. Children, animals and the elderly are extremely sensitive to this rite, and the Storyteller should take special care to remember that almost anything can happen when an entire populace begins to panic....



Taghairm Rites

The sacred ceremonies that guide the social gatherings of the Bastet, taghairm rites allow the proud and territorial Folk to gather and maintain the networks of secrets and Renown that keep Bastet society running.

Basic

Caliah: As with the Garou Moot Rite, this ritual opens all taghairms, welcoming those in attendance and giving thanks to the ancestors and to the spirits for allowing such a gathering to commence. Taghairm that often meet with the same members typically come up with elaborate ceremonies as the "regulars" renew their places within the circle and any newcomers formally introduce themselves to their fellow Bastet, but the complexity of the rite is entirely up to the cats involved. This rite requires a standard test to perform and refreshes the Gnosis Traits of all those who take part in it as a sense of togetherness fills the assembly. For a time at least, all the Bastet are "hamaal," one family — grudges and disputes are forgotten. This rite may only be performed once per month for the same group or by the same ritemaster; doing so more often can be done in times of crisis, but offers no Gnosis benefit to the participants.

Grooming the Newcomer: Ever finicky about those they associate with, the Bastet have a longstanding tradition of testing newcomers for trustworthiness and various levels of merit, ensuring those who join a taghairm can pull their own weight. Until this rite is performed, a Bastet is considered "naa," an untrustworthy stranger, and treated accordingly. This rite typically consists of a series of questions, often accompanied by Gifts such as *Sense the Truth* and *Righteous Gaze*, although some groups require quests or other tasks instead; once the testing is finished, the ritemaster turns to her fellow Bastet and asks for their approval. Those who receive it are greeted with food and drink and considered welcome at the taghairm ever after.

Hanshii: Cats can carry grudges as well if not better than their wolf cousins, and this rite is one way of allowing such grudges to be worked out without needless chaos or bloodshed. The actual means of settling such disputes depend heavily on the tribes in question: tribes like the Khan and the Simba tend to favor battles to the death, while the Qualmi and the Ceilican prefer battles of wits, and the Bagheera and the Bubasti choose tests of judgment. Ultimately, the method of settling the challenge is up to the ritemaster; once those involved, and their allies, have agreed to abide by the decision, the test then runs its course. This rite requires a Gnosis Trait to enact; furthermore, no Gifts or outside intervention are permitted and any cheating immediately gives the ritemaster a sharp tingle and calls a halt to this rite. Additionally, the fur of the cheater glows with unearthly light, making their cowardice plain for all to see. Such cheating also costs the Bastet at least one Trait of Honor Renown, and werecats are notoriously intolerant of such deception. Most Bastet live by decisions made during Hanshii, although some simply choose to settle their next dispute away from witnesses....



Intermediate

Exile: Taghairms represent a great deal of trust; those found to have violated that trust are branded and cast out, the sign of their indiscretion plain for any subsequent ritemasters to see. In most cases, this rite requires a majority vote on the part of those at the taghairm, although some groups require such a serious decision to be unanimous before imposing sentence. The offender's crimes are listed, the grooming rite is renounced, and the ritemaster spends a Rage Trait to brand a sigil meaning "oathbreaker" on the Bastet's forehead; the taghairm members then chase the cat away. Those caught during such chases are usually beaten within an inch of their lives but allowed to live so that they might remember their shame. This mark is invisible to normal sight but appears to any who use the grooming rite on the Bastet, as well as to those using Gifts such as *Sense the Truth* and *Righteous Gaze*. Those convicted with this rite lose all Honor and Wisdom Renown and are objects of scorn and ridicule wherever they go. This mark may be removed only with the forgiveness of a ritemaster (a separate rite of the same rank) or the performance of some great quest; while powerful or falsely convicted Bastet can sometimes rally others in support of her, most such exiles are branded for a lifetime.

Advanced

Festival of Dreams: When a taghairm is in need of special guidance, they sometimes invoke this rite, which offers potent if often cryptic visions and dreams to those hardy enough to withstand the ritual itself. This rite requires a Gnosis Trait from all those participating, and creates a cloud of mystical smoke identical to the Balam Gift *Vision Cloud*. Those within the cloud must make a Static Physical Challenge against seven Traits every half-hour; those who fail must stagger outside. The difficulty of this challenge rises every time, until at last only one Bastet is left; at that time, the last Bastet (and only this one) receives a vision related to the problem the taghairm seeks advice on. Such visions are always highly symbolic but offer excellent insight to those who can decipher them; Storytellers should take care to make visions dramatic and memorable in keeping with the needs of her story. Those who receive visions in this way may even receive Cleverness Renown for their resolve and insight, though Bastet who invoke this rite too often typically find their visions becoming less and less helpful or even outright deceptive. Always in motion is the future, after all....

Jamak

Though it would seem otherwise upon casual inspection, werecats aren't actually as solitary as they first appear; indeed, many Bastet form a close bond with a particular spirit known as a Jamak. Such relationships often begin as innocent exchanges of aid or information that are cemented into something more serious as the inclination of the two parties involved sees fit. In return for promising to come when requested (or at least grant some favor, if a personal appearance isn't possible), the Jamak gains a small source of power



and recognition while the Bastet gains an extra ally in the daily fight for survival. And while the Jamak relationship is usually fairly short, a year or less, some of these bonds survive for a lifetime.

It should be noted, however, that these spirits are far more capricious and mercurial than typical Garou totems, and those Bastet who expect their Jamak to come running in *deus ex machina* and save them from danger are in for a rude surprise. They may appear as a ghostly images, grant favors and offer advice from time to time, but most Jamak aren't inclined to fight the cat's battles for her and will only join combat in times of great distress. Spirit Keepers should take care that Jamak in play have very distinct and memorable personalities and that the Bastet remember to treat them with respect — an insulted Jamak may withhold favors or information at bad times, and an angry one can do far worse than that.

Presents and Lessons:

Granting a Gift vs. Teaching a Gift

It is important to note the distinction between Gifts that a Jamak (or totem, for that matter) *teaches*, and those that the spirit *grants*. Teaching a Gift means exactly that — the changer must spend the appropriate Experience Traits involved, just as if she was learning the Gift normally, but once done the Gift becomes part of her, to use when she likes. This may not sound like much, but in the lives of most Bastet, where teachers are typically few and far between, having a spirit ally willing to teach a Gift or two can be a real godsend. The only exceptional aspect of the Gifts a Jamak teaches is that the Bastet need not necessarily be of the appropriate Rank usually required to learn the Gift. She must only convince her Jamak that she is worthy of learning it. Of course, this may be next to impossible if a low-ranking cat wishes to learn an Advanced Gift from her Jamak, but it certainly beats *definitely* having to wait until the right rank!

By contrast, granted Gifts that are just that — favors from the Jamak in question. They're essentially one-shot Gifts. Once they're used up, the Bastet must earn another favor from her Jamak to access them again. Granted Gifts do not require any Gnosis or other Trait expenditures to activate, however, and thus make excellent surprise or last-ditch weapons on the part of wily Bastet. (Should the Gift *require* Trait expenditures specifically to determine damage or duration, such as the Khan Gift *Firewar*, the Bastet must still spend Traits normally — favors are favors, but some things are too powerful to be absolutely free!) Of course, the Bastet may eventually attain sufficient Rank and Experience Traits to learn such Gifts for real, and most Jamak are willing to teach any Gifts they normally grant as favors.



Bonyscrap

Cost: 1

Bonyscrap is a vulture spirit, follower of the dead and dying, a scavenger who pries the secrets of the dead from their flesh, trailing misery around the world in all its forms. As all things die eventually, however, and this gives Bonyscrap a lot of gossip and loose information in the course of his travels. While not widely respected by more honorable Bastet, those who court his favor can pick up the most amazing bits of information from time to time. Not that such information comes easily, though — Bonyscrap loves how much he repulses the neat ways of the Bastet and will tease a cat exhaustively before giving up what he knows. Just what this information is depends on the Storyteller; in a pinch, such hints can be translated into a temporary level or two of the *Enigmas* or *Investigation* Ability, although it's preferable to roleplay the exchange instead.

Ban: Bonyscrap is *extremely* obnoxious to be around, and loves testing the patience of anyone in his company; those who can put up with his annoying prattling and his constant offers of roadkill and rotted flesh are all right with him.

Butterfly

Cost: 1

Never confined to just one shape, but forever transforming into a variety of colors and sizes, Butterfly represents the changing heart of creation, the metamorphosis that all living things undergo. A peaceful spirit, Butterfly requires that her children keep their Rage in check, but in return offers them much insight into the shifting nature of reality. Those beloved of Butterfly gain access to the Gift *Monkey's Uncle* and are two Traits up on all tests to resist frenzy.

Ban: Butterfly's allies cannot attack a foe in anger, only in defense.

Citlacoatl, the Feathered Serpent King

Cost: 3

Crafty and perverse, Citlacoatl floats over creation, laughing at the short-lived beings below him as they scurry about their lives. A traveler between the lands of life and death, Citlacoatl sees everything with the unending patience and amusement of those with the widest perspectives of all. Typically only Balam and Pumonca can learn of Citlacoatl's ways; other tribes are simply too alien to understand the notion of creation the way he does. Fickle in his favors, most of the time the Serpent King simply sends snakes to aid his followers; those who are particularly wise might also learn the *Gift Dance of the Cobra*. Truly inspiring followers sometimes learn the *Rite of Nine Lives* or the *Gift Walking Between Worlds*, but such folk are rare — Citlacoatl takes delight in warfare as well as wisdom, and most of his followers meet their end before truly understanding his view of death.

Ban: Although similar in certain ways, Citlacoatl and King Snake have never been able to come to an accord; a follower of one becomes an enemy of the other. Also, Citlacoatl detests the followers of Unmaker Wyrms, seeing creation as far too funny to be allowed to be destroyed.



Hatii the Thunderer

Cost: 5

Only rarely does this mighty Elephant-spirit grant those of catkind his favor, but those who enjoy it gain much in wisdom as well as a hide tough enough to withstand great amounts of punishment. The Bastet must commit an act of extreme bravery or wisdom to gain the Thunderer's attention; those werecats who do so protecting elephant herds are his favorites. Allies of Hatii gain the Traits *Tough* and *Enduring* during a battle (which can be bid and lost like any other Traits and fade away after that specific fight) and may also gain the benefit of the *Eidetic Memory* Merit for one event each story. Hatii may also help the werecat with a particularly difficult problem from time to time, allowing the Narrator to slip some advice to the stumped Bastet in the guise of Hatii. Finally, if on the plains of Africa or India, herds of elephants may intervene to save the werecat's life, but such manifestations are rare indeed. Hatii will *never* choose a Simba; there is simply too much bad blood between their races.

Ban: Hatii's allies must defend his elephant cousins whenever possible, and must hunt down and kill those who kill elephants for sport or ivory.

Ika-Ika the Monkey King

Cost: 3

A spirit of pure, benevolent chaos, Ika-Ika represents the essence of mischief, nonsense and ferocity; those who follow him must likewise love and respect this drive to break the rules at all costs. Ika-Ika seldom befriends many Bastet, but is a true friend when he does; of all the Jamak, he'll be the first to appear to help an ally in need. Favors from Ika-Ika usually manifest in the form of a level of *Dodge* and *Athletics*, or the Traits *Dexterous* and *Nimble*, which last for a day or a session. Those who earn his respect might also be taught the Gifts *Treeclimber*, *Farsight*, *Clawstorm* and (naturally enough) *Monkey's Uncle*, although these last two require a long friendship and attainment of at least *Tilau* before Ika-Ika will teach them. Bagheera and Swara find Ika-Ika amusing, but the Simba and the Khan dislike his boisterous ways, and the Bubasti downright loathe him and avoid his followers whenever possible. Naturally, Ika-Ika just likes to tease such folk all the more!

Ban: Allies of the Monkey King must really cut loose and kick down the walls of the established order, although they must know when to stop as well — Ika-Ika is a spirit of enlightened disorder, not mindless cruelty. They must also value friendship highly. Ika-Ika also likes to show up personally at different times, appearing either as a monkey or a crazy person; his friends should welcome him if they want to keep him.

King of Cats

Cost: 3

Clever and rakish, the King of Cats represents the sensual and dramatic side of feline nature, forever questing for adventure. King of Cats seldom obeys the laws of the land but always does good deeds — he is the original outlaw with a heart of gold and treasures those determined to live and die with the same rebellious



sense of style. Occasionally he will appear as a black or white cat, but usually he prefers a human shape, preferably dressed in swashbuckling attire. Those who earn his friendship gain the *Graceful Merit* as well as the permanent Physical Trait *Graceful*. They also gain a *Fair Escape* whenever they are within three steps of a fireplace, as he shows them how to vanish up it in a flash. (They may still take some damage if a fire is burning at the time, however.) Finally, he can also teach any Bastet Gift but seldom does unless particularly inspired by an ally's act of daring — and it takes a great adventure indeed to inspire such a dashing fellow!

Ban: Followers of the King of Cats must live by his code: Play hard, laugh at death and go out with a flourish. He also cannot abide those of a sober disposition; if an ally falls into depression or morbidity, he will abandon her to find another friend.

King-of-Beasts

Cost: 6

A favorite of many Simba, this majestic Lion-spirit glows like the sun, forcing all to cower before him; the weak become filled with abject terror or blind obedience while even the strong find themselves kneeling and averting their eyes in his presence. Too costly for most Bastet to afford on their own, he is typically followed by a pride (who can "pool" their Background points to purchase him, the same as a Garou totem). Up to four Bastet in the same pride can enjoy his favor at the same time. Those he chooses must address him in formal tones, but they receive a free retest on one strength-related challenge per favor, and are considered three Traits up on all uses of the *Intimidation Ability*. King-of-Beasts also teaches many Gifts, though he will refrain from doing so until he feels the pride has proved itself worthy.

Ban: King-of-Beasts demands that his followers obey his will while dominating those around him and tolerates no insubordination among his chosen; any act of insolence or cowardice costs the entire pride his favor, perhaps forever.

Lord of Nightmares

Cost: 4

Ancient legend held that cats had special power over sleeping mortals, and this Jamak represents just such an aspect of catkind. The Lord of Nightmares is a spirit of mystery and vengeance, whose allies haunt the dreams of the wicked until they see the error of their ways. He usually appears as either a normal or giant-sized black housecat with eyes like stars, although when it suits him he occasionally takes the shape of a pale human garbed entirely in black. Allies of the Lord of Nightmares gain a free level of the *Stealth* and *Enigmas* Abilities and receive a free retest on all challenges related to dreams and dream interpretation. In addition, this spirit sometimes teaches his followers Gifts such as *Night's Passage*, *Farsight*, *Eerie Eyes*, *Phantasm* and *Perfect Passage*, as well as the *Rite of Fear*. The Lord of Nightmares never accepts Bastet of Daylight Pryio; what's more, no favors are ever granted while the sun is in the sky, as only during darkness does the Lord of Nightmares hold sway.



Ban: All allies of the Lord of Nightmares must take the Gift *Night Terror*. Once per story, they must use it on a wicked person until that person repents her sins. Usually the target is of the cat's own choosing, but sometimes it is decided by the Lord of Nightmares himself (a.k.a. the Storyteller). The Bastet may use other means to try to convince the target to repent during this time, but is forbidden to harm him physically, although threats are acceptable. Failing to do so will earn this Jamak's displeasure until proper atonement is made. Due to a past disagreement, allies of the Lord of Nightmares cannot associate with those of the Mistress of Catkind.

Mantis

Cost: 2

Thoughtful and patient, Mantis teaches his allies to watch the world around them and wait for the proper time to act instead of blindly charging into situations like so many of their other changing cousins. The favored of Mantis receive a free level of the *Meditation Ability* as well as dreams and prophecies that allow them to reduce by three Traits the difficulty for any relevant challenges involving the *Enigmas*, *Investigation* or *Occult Abilities*. Such visions require remaining still and concentrating for at least an hour or so and cannot be gained during combat or other hectic situations.

Ban: Allies of Mantis cannot be hasty or reckless; if they aren't smart enough to be still, the spirit will leave them alone.

Mistress of Catkind

Cost: 5

Freyja, Durga, Hecate, Sekhmet and (of course) Bast — all these are but different names for the female force that long ago gave birth to all catkind and watches over them still. By and large a gentle Jamak whose very approach brings silence and awe, the Mistress appears to teach her children what they need, be it the raw skills of survival or the knowledge of magical Gifts, then disappears once more. She does not often appear before she is needed, however, and those who try to rely on her to do all their work for them will incur her anger quickly. The Mistress of Catkind takes many forms, from a tiny blue kitten to a raging white tiger to a delicate human woman clothed in moonlight, but her followers instinctively recognize her no matter what shape she wears. While she is certainly capable of great violence when the need arises, like a mother lion defending her kits, most of the time the Mistress leaves such matters in the hands of her followers, trusting them to make the right decisions.

The Mistress of Catkind usually appears to aid her lost or injured children, or to rally them for a good cause. She may teach any Gift or Ability related to all catkind but will hold back such favors until convinced they are needed and the Bastet in question can be trusted with the powers they confer. Occasionally if intervention is needed, she will send animal minions to a follower's aid or grant a special power for a short time, but most of the time she prefers to advise the Bastet and take her leave.



Ban: Allies of the Mistress must have nothing to do with the servants or powers of Cahlash, no matter what the cause might be, and a Bastet who chooses to follow the Unmaker will lose this Jamak forever. Needless destruction or perversion is also anathema to her. Finally, her followers must not associate with those of the Lord of Nightmares, due to an ancient rift between the two spirits.

Old Snapjaw

Cost: 2

This wily Alligator- or Crocodile-spirit (depending on where one finds her) waits beneath the waters of time, watching as things pass by and devouring those mystical secrets she encounters. A favored Jamak of the Bubasti, Old Snapjaw demands that her followers best her in a riddle contest (several Static Mental Challenge with the *Enigmas* Ability against varying difficulties) before imparting any of her occult knowledge, but the clever ones who pass her tests receive a free retest on all *Enigmas* tests for the rest of the session, save those of Old Snapjaw herself of course! Those she favors may also learn mystic secrets from time to time (Narrator's discretion) and earn an extra Rage Trait from her ferocity.

Ban: Those who would be allies with Old Snapjaw must seek to learn many mystical secrets and cannot hesitate even for a moment to do what is necessary to gain them. She does not choose cowards or fools, and those who earn her wrath may be devoured; this does no damage, but marks the victim as untrustworthy and cowardly to other Jamak.

Thunderbird

Cost: 5

The fury of the heavens, the wisdom of the raging winds, Thunderbird is courage and dedication personified. Those who follow him face a tough road, as he constantly tests his allies, but those who can face his trials are destined for lives of great Ferocity. All his children receive the *Intimidating* and *Survival* Abilities, and can call on three extra Willpower Traits per story. As many of their Gifts come from him to begin with, Thunderbird can teach any Pumonca Gift, although non-Pumonca will have to perform extra feats of bravery to earn such honors. Thunderbird may even smite the cat's foes with lightning in a time of truly great need but dislikes fighting the Bastet's battles for him and will require a great service in return.

Ban: Thunderbird's followers cannot flee in fear from anything; doing so automatically costs them the favor of this spirit, although he tends to be more forgiving about such events than most. They must also battle the forces of decay (Banes, vampires, fomori, etc.) and the Wyrms whenever they find them. Those who dare to side with such beings will be struck down by Thunderbird's anger.

Tzinzie

Cost: 2

Eternally buzzing and biting, Tzinzie the Fly Lord is considered merely a pest by many Bastet, but those who take the time to appreciate his wisdom



understand that he represents the voice of the foolkiller, one who dances past more ponderous beings in order to show them their own failures and shortcomings. Those who become his allies are often taught the Gifts *Catfeet*, *Swipe* and *First Strike* and receive a free retest on all *Dodge* tests when fighting a larger, more powerful opponent, provided the retest is only to avoid harm and not to cause damage.

Ban: Tzinzie demands that his allies never bully the weak, nor can they tolerate a self-important person to rest comfortably around them.

Whispers

Cost: 2

A spirits of secrets and half-truths, Whispers shows her allies the way to new insights and lost secrets. Although her motives are seldom clear even to her devout followers, Bastet who carry this Jamak's favor are seldom short on gossip, and even hard-to-find secrets tend to come to them on barely audible currents in the wind. Only the wisest werecats have a chance of gaining the favor of Whispers; others may notice a faint stirring in the air as she passes, but seldom give it much thought. Faced with social intrigue or a difficult problem, allies of Whispers may attempt to win or tie a Simple Test; success reduces all *Enigmas* or *Subterfuge* difficulties by three Traits as barely audible whispers lead the Bastet in the right direction. (Only the Bastet herself may hear such hints, even if others around her possess *Heightened Senses* and the like.) On a whim, Whispers may also grant or teach her followers Gifts like *Night's Passage*, *Cheshire Prank* or *Eavesdropper's Ear*.

Ban: Allies of Whispers must avoid making loud noises, especially while speaking.

Trinkets

The following items are but a tiny sample of the kinds of magical objects that have fallen into Bastet paws over time, and Storytellers should feel free to come up with a variety of powers and legends associated with the artifacts a cat comes across. Most such objects are fetishes, such as those described in **Laws of the Wild**, but others are items of wizardly, faerie or even unknown origin. Who are the cats to complain? Unless otherwise noted, however, use of these artifacts is not limited to Bastet; any species that can normally employ fetishes (such as *Changing Breeds* and some wizards) can use the trinkets listed below, regardless of species.

Devil's Deck

Fetish Trait Cost: 1 **Gnosis** 5

Spirit Affinity: Faerie, Trick-

ery, Illusion

This simple but effective trinket deals the Bastet whatever card she needs, allowing her to manipulate games of chance to her benefit. All that's required is to blow on the cards and request good luck (as well as the standard Gnosis Test, of course); if successful, the Bastet may take the deck and choose whatever cards she wants when she plays, if an actual deck of cards is used.



Naturally, this action is out of character to represent the magic of the cards — the Bastet doesn't actually pick up the deck in such a way! If a real deck of cards is not being used, the Bastet is two Traits up on all tests related to gambling with the deck and receives a free retest on all such tests as well. Variations on this trinket include Tarot decks, playing cards, even collectable card games; Bastet using such decks, however, are advised to switch every so often to avoid attracting the wrong kind of attention to her "winning streak."

Lotus Petals

Fetish Trait Cost: 2 **Gnosis:** N/A **Spirit Affinity:** Seline

Not actually full-fledged trinkets but talens, or one-use mystic items, Lotus Petals are taken from special 1000-year lotuses that grow in the Court of Luna. Wise cats who make the journey to the moon and back are sometimes allowed to take up to five petals as a sign of Seline's love; some kuasha leave them to kits as a sign of affection. What these petals do is entirely up to Storyteller, but some "common" effects include: the power to dissolve any poison, the ability to cure any disease, the power to increase the potency of Moon Rites or the seed to ensure the birth of a Bastet kitten. Any, all, or none of these things might be true, and only the Storyteller knows for sure....

Grandmother's Stones

Fetish Trait Cost: 2 **Gnosis:** 5 **Spirit Affinity:** Seline, Wisdom

These brilliant blue gems are said to have originated from the aftermath of the great flood of long ago and allow female Bastet to increase their Gnosis rating while the light of Seline shines. To use this trinket, the Bastet must make a series of Simple Tests against the Gnosis rating of the stone, one test for each permanent Gnosis Trait she possesses. For each success, she gains an extra temporary Gnosis Trait while the moon is shining. These extra Traits can be spent like any other Gnosis Traits but cannot be replenished until the stone is reactivated once more. This trinket may only be activated once per lunar cycle and only on the full moon. During the day, the werecat returns to her normal Gnosis rating.

Truth-Speaker Stick

Fetish Trait Cost: 3 **Gnosis:** 5 **Spirit Affinity:** Honor, Leadership, Tiger

This handy trinket allows the owner to determine if someone is telling the truth. Once activated, the trinket is typically passed around at a gathering such as a taghairm; protocol at such occasions typically demands that only those holding the stick may speak. If the person holding it attempts to speak a lie, this trinket automatically leaps into the air and whaps them repeatedly on the head; no damage is inflicted, but the point is certainly clear to all! Once the liar has been exposed, the stick floats back to its owner's hands. If surrounded by liars, the stick glows like an ember and tries to jump from its owner's hands as well; those who follow it are in for a serious migraine! Only those with supernatural powers of deception have any hope of getting by the stick, and even they must best it in a challenge of their power versus the Stick's Gnosis rating; failure means they are subject to the same painful lessons as everyone else. (Ouch.)



Hakarrs

A hakarr or hunga-munga is a sacred weapon of the Bastet, the equivalent of the Garou klaive. Unlike klaives, however, they are not at all common among the werecats, especially outside of Africa and the Middle East, though this has begun to change in the last century. Also unlike the Garou and their klaives, Bastet require no level of Renown to possess a hunga-munga; those lucky enough to have them are considered worthy already, although werecats with especially powerful ones may certainly have to fight off greedy hands from time to time! There are many kinds of hakarrs, but the essential design remains the same: a long blade ending in a wide curve, with a number of blades protruding in every direction from the hilt, allowing the wielder to cut with any side and balancing out the heft of the blade. Skilled wielders can throw the blade some distance as well by using the *Athletics* Ability; some of the more elaborate hunga-munga even have spirits that return thrown blades to the wielder's hands! All damage inflicted is aggravated once these weapons are activated, and shapechangers suffer the regular effects of silver damage as well. Of course, this cuts both ways; wielders suffer the usual Gnosis penalty for carrying silver items, and are in no way protected should someone turn their own blade on them!

What follows then are the statistics for a basic hunga-munga, invested with a regular War-spirit; Storytellers should feel free to create hakarr with all manner of exotic powers in addition to this basic "package," depending on the spirits bound into them. Thus a hunga-munga with a Fire-spirit might burst into flame on command, while one with a Snake-spirit might inject victims with poison on a successful hit. Players should come up with names and histories associated with any hunga-munga they possess and even suggest possible powers for them as well, though the Storyteller is the final arbiter of what is allowed and (more importantly) how many Background Traits such trinkets cost, as well as any activation costs or other requirements necessary for their use.

Silver Hakarr

Fetish Trait Cost: 3 **Gnosis:** 6

Melee Bonus Traits: 3

Like the klaives of the Garou, these silver hunga-mungas are dangerous to make and deadly to use, reserved only for the most terrible grudge battles. Crafted from raw silver and imbued with War-spirits, these weapons are considered valuable in their native lands of Africa and legendary in the Americas. A hakarr's owner suffers a one-Gnosis penalty from her usual total. Hakarrs inflict aggravated damage, plus the usual penalties of silver if the target is a shapeshifter. These weapons are *heavy* — thick cutting blades project out from the handle in every direction — and only a strong combatant can carry one, much less attempt to throw it in combat.