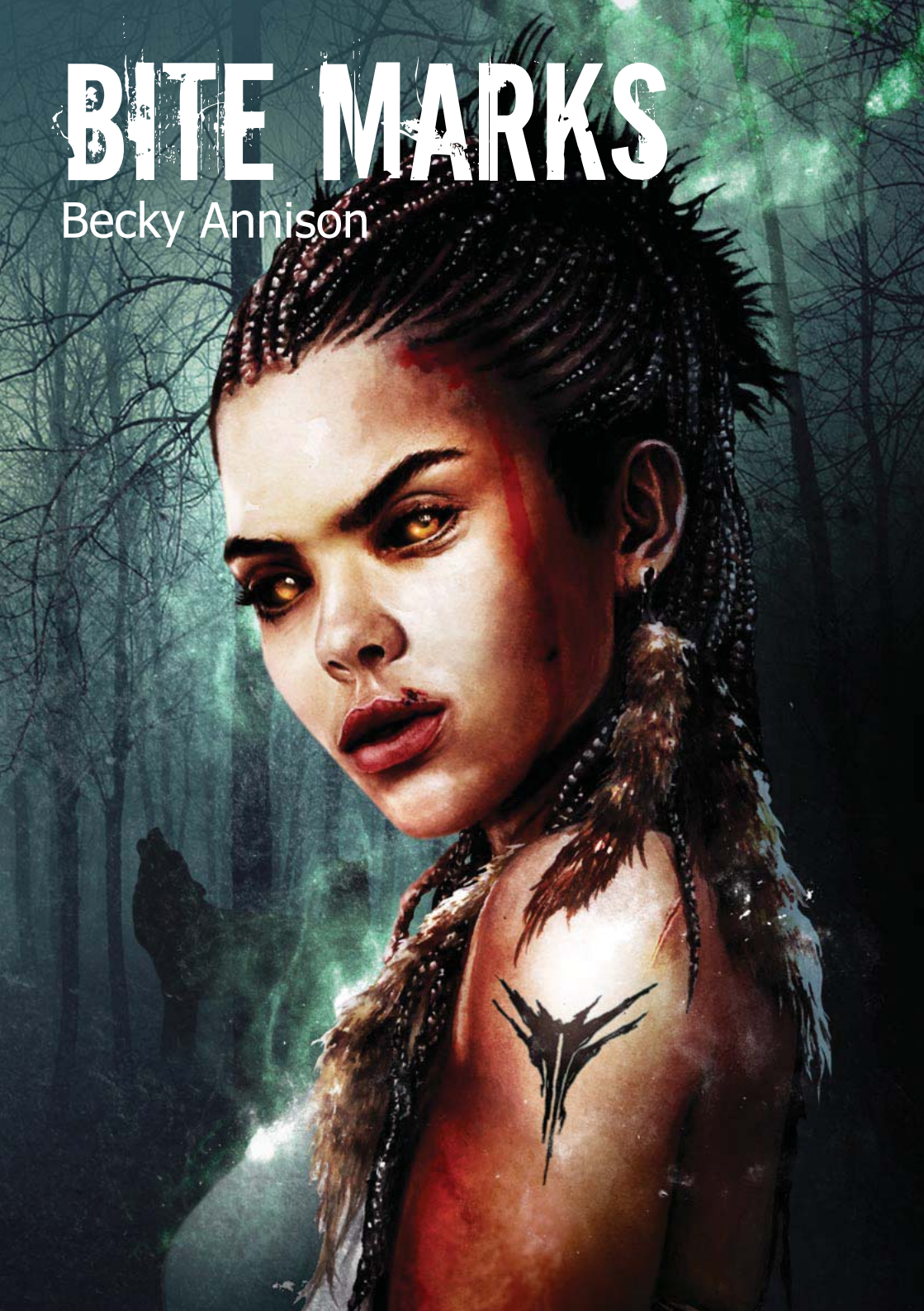


BITE MARKS

Becky Annison



BITE MARKS

A GAME OF WEREWOLF PACK DYNAMICS

BECKY ANNISON

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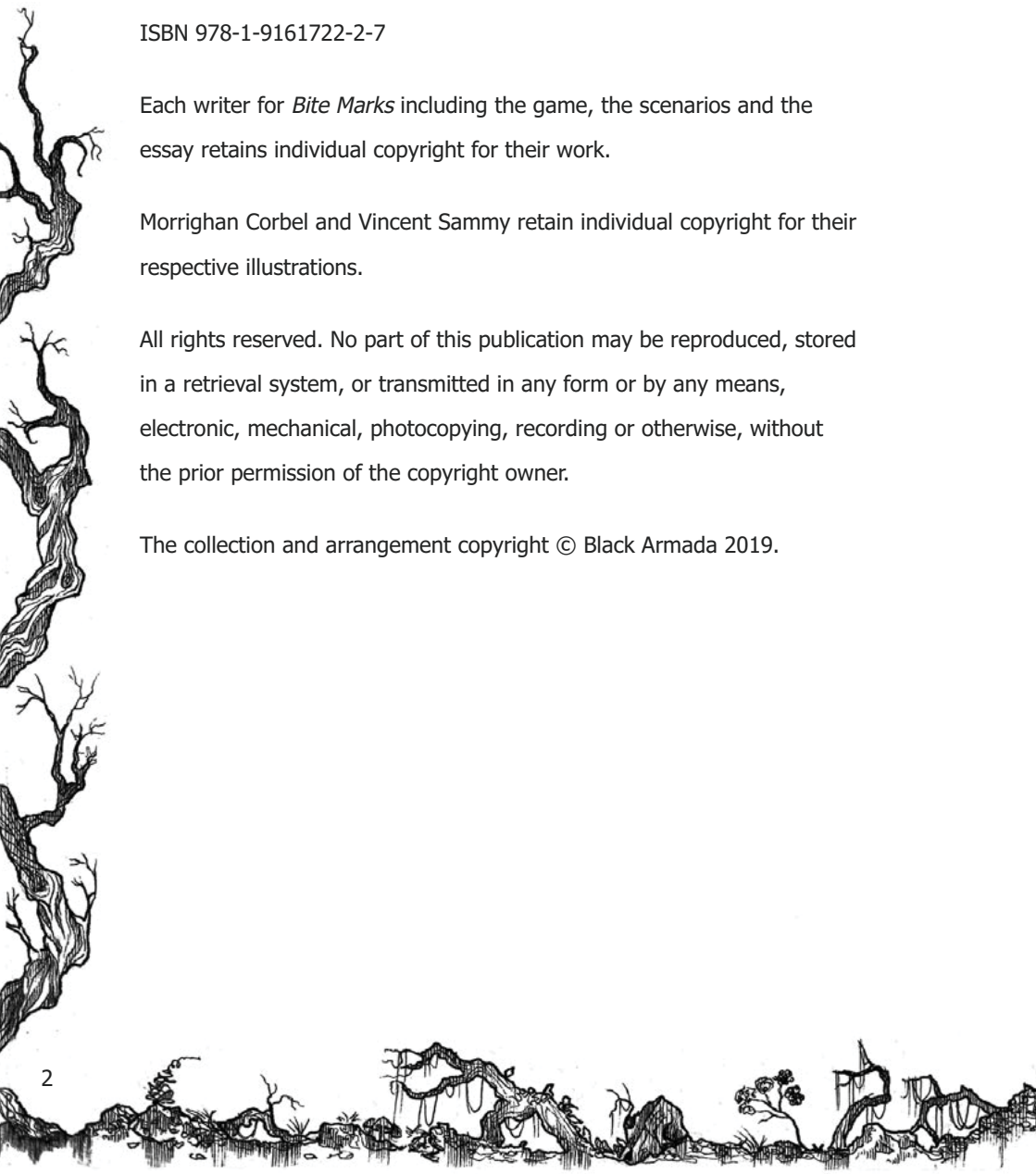
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Dedicated to Josh – I love you more than werewolves.



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INTRODUCTION

Pack is family. Pack is home. Pack is where you are accepted, no questions.

Were you born this way or did someone bite you? Whatever the reason, the joy, the trauma you are home now. You are Pack. This is a game about being a werewolf, a werewolf in a Pack. The Pack is a deeply intimate and close family and, like a family, sometimes it is full of love and happiness and sometimes it is brutal and dysfunctional. But it is never to be ignored, even if you hate it – it will shape you. Your relationship with the Pack is the cornerstone of who you are and how you define yourself. Whether you are an Alpha, a dedicated foot soldier, a pacifist scholar or a rebellious cub.

In *Bite Marks* we will be telling the story of the Pack and its Packmates. We will be exploring the relationships between Packmates, drawing out their loves, rivalries and betrayals, finding the cracks that could shatter the Pack and drown you in hate: and that is just what's going on inside the Pack. The Pack will face almost insurmountable threats from the outside; forcing the Packmates to choose where they fight and die. The fractures threatening to destroy the Pack, the inescapable pull of the Pack-family dynamic, and the cycle between these two states, are the core of the game.



This is also a game about struggling with the beast inside, deciding whether you will fight and protect, murder or mutilate; and whether you do these things because you love the feral life, or as a sacrifice to save those you are bound to.

Finally it is about the emotional life of a family – a family spilling over with instincts, passions and violence – and what it feels like to be one of them.

Playing *Bite Marks* centres on three things:

- Ⓒ being a badass werewolf,
- Ⓒ the feeling of belonging and standing shoulder to shoulder with comrades, and
- Ⓒ the rivalries and messy relationships of pack-life.

A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

Many games have sections explaining what a role-playing game is. This one is mine.

~~I HAVE NEVER ROLE-PLAYED ANYTHING? WHAT IS THIS? IS IT LIKE D&D?~~

Okay! Hello person new to role-playing. I'm excited and a little intimidated that I get to introduce this hobby to you.

A role-playing game is us coming together to make a story. We are going to have a conversation, and that conversation will end up being our story. Most books like this one will contain all the things you need to know to make a story with a particular flavour or genre. There are all sorts of ways of making up that story; different rules and guidelines will get you different stories. In the stories we tell with *Bite Marks* we will mostly play characters (like actors do). Some of the time we might take roles more like an author or a director or stage manager. The big thing here is that instead of watching your story on TV or reading it in a book – you get to be a part of it.

This is a game because we are having fun, we are playing, and because we have no idea how the story will end and what will happen on the way. Sometimes we don't know because we will use dice to decide what happens; sometimes we don't know because the other people we play with will delight and surprise us.





It might seem intimidating – having a big book full of ‘rules’ just to tell a story. Start with understanding the Powered by the Apocalypse system, and then look at the Player Principles, Basic Moves and Skins (page 27). This will show you the type of story we are telling and give you the basic tools to create it. Don’t get worried about making the ‘wrong’ choice – whatever you decide to do in the game will move the story forward, and that is what really matters.

This is a game you play around a table with friends. So in that sense it is like D&D, but it is a different type of story. The story we are telling in this game is about a pack of werewolves.

I’VE DONE SOME ROLE-PLAYING - BUT I HAVE NO IDEA ABOUT THIS POWERED BY THE APOCALYPSE THING? EXPLAIN THAT TO ME!

Powered by the Apocalypse is another type of system for running a game, which has a really direct connection between the mechanics and the fiction. The mechanics change things in the fiction of the story; the fiction of the story triggers the mechanics. The mechanics may have a bigger impact on the story than you might be used to. Relax, and practise improvising rather than trying to think two steps ahead. The system does a lot of the work for you.

The system is skewed towards making the characters’ lives complicated. You can miss a roll and face the consequences, you can succeed with something that complicates the story, or you can succeed with special

sauce on top. Embrace all three things, because they only make the story more interesting.

Read the section on System (page 25) for more details.

I'VE PLAYED LOADS OF PBTA GAMES, BECKY. WHAT MAKES THIS ONE SO SPECIAL?

First this is a game about being a werewolf Pack. There are mechanics for how powerful the Pack are, which is directly affected by how close they are. This game gives you space to explore your character's feelings and their relationship with the Pack. You will get mechanical benefits for talking about your emotions, and it will make the Pack stronger if you do so.

It is also a game about a world which is red in tooth and claw. The Pack may tear itself apart at any moment; it may be devastated by Hunters or a rival pack. Losing control of the beast inside will have messy, bloody consequences; losing control of the beast in front of your Pack, doubly so. There are particular mechanics for dealing with control and what happens when it is lost, to drive that experience: see Domination on page 108 and the Move 'Give In To The Wolf' on page 118.

The other main difference is that the MC doesn't have an Agenda as they normally do – just stick to the Principles and that will be fine. Also the players have their own set of Principles to guide their actions, making the game feel more wolfish!





**SAFETY FIRST:
MAKING IT FUN
FOR EVERYONE**

SAFETY FIRST: MAKING IT FUN FOR EVERYONE

The first rule of *Bite Marks* is:

"Your safety is more important than my fun. Always."

Bite Marks is a game for exploring emotions – the emotions of your character and maybe your own emotions. It is also a game about werewolves who might lose control and wreak violence and terror, and who can Dominate each other into doing things they don't want to do.

All of these things can potentially take players into uncomfortable territory and beyond. So we are going to have a few rules on safety to make sure that everyone is supported at the gaming table.

First, here are some safety techniques and approaches that I recommend. Everyone's safety needs are different, and these approaches cover a variety of different needs. Read them, discuss them with your gaming group, and decide what combination will work best for you. But remember, these are just techniques and tools. Nothing is a substitute for open and clear communication and a commitment from everyone that we will all take care of each other.

Later, there is a section specifically dealing with the game's Dominate Move. This is an important part of *Bite Marks*; but everyone should be

clear about how it is used and how it should not be used. MCs should always clearly explain Dominate prior to the game – some players may not want to play a game with the Dominate Move. That is cool – maybe *Bite Marks* isn't a game they will enjoy, and they should have the opportunity to opt out before it starts.

BANNED LIST

Prior to the start of the game the MC asks all the players to write down the items they do not want to see in the game e.g. animal abuse, dementia, loving and lingering descriptions of gore and torture. The MC should write their own list. Then the MC compiles a single anonymised list of all of the items, and you agree as a group that these will not come up in the game. Then simply don't use anything on the banned list, either in the pre-game set up, character creation, back stories, or in the gameplay itself.

X-CARD

It is not always possible to predict what you will find upsetting during the course of a game. The X-card, created by John Stavropoulos, empowers people to interrupt mid-scene when the game is becoming overwhelming and not fun.

Have a piece of paper with an X drawn on it on the table where everyone can reach it . At any time during the game someone can touch the paper, indicating that a recently introduced element should be removed from



play (without having to justify themselves). The players and MC then remove that element from play and continue the game. There is a more detailed description of the technique here: <http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg>

SCRIPT CHANGE

This is a tool designed by Brie Beau Sheldon which really builds on the X-card, giving you a battery of techniques to better calibrate the game for your needs. Script Change uses a number of cards that you touch as needed (similar to the X-card) but instead of instantly erasing the content you can be a bit more nuanced with your direction. The main cards in Script Change are **'Pause'**, **'Rewind'** and **'Fast-Forward'**.

Unlike the X-card you are encouraged to be clear and specific about what material you are making the direction on. This has the advantage of ensuring that everyone knows exactly what material to avoid in the future. The person invoking the direction then works with the other players and MC to agree the new course of the fiction as necessary.

The direction allows everyone to deal with the material in different ways. Either **'Rewind'** and start again editing out the unwanted material; or **'Fast-Forward'** keeping the material in play but glossing over details and moving through it quickly; or **'Pause'** when you need a moment to pause from the intensity of the game and to think, maybe then moving to a **'Rewind'** or **'Fast Forward'** as needed.

For more details, more tools, and ideas about Script Change go here: <https://tinyurl.com/nphed7m>

MC ROLE IN SAFETY

People often look to the MC to set the tone at the gaming table, so whilst every player can and should be looking out for the safety of each other, the MC has a few more things they need to do. Firstly, check in with your players regularly: that can sometimes mean pausing a really intense scene to check people are ok, or emailing players individually the next morning to do the same. Build in some decompression time for the players to chat out of character after the end of the session (but before everyone leaves). This debrief space allows people to talk about what they've just experienced with the only other people who'll really understand: it is vital to enable people to contextualise and process the story and the session which just ended. All sorts of scenes (not just the obviously tense ones) can provoke a need to share and receive validation from the gaming group, and this is a game which benefits from consciously building that in to your session time.

Finally if a player rolls a 0–6 on the 'Give in to the Wolf' Move the MC takes over their character for the next scene and makes a Hard Move. The MC must ensure that they do not use anything on the banned list in this scene, and neither should they have the character engage in any sexual activity, because in the case of in-character sex the consent always stays with the player(s) concerned.





SEX MOVES

This is a game about adult werewolves, and each playbook has a Sex Move: including the Cub – a character who is an adult person but a newly turned werewolf. If you want to make the Cub or any of the characters into a child then you should remove that Move from the skin.

DOMINATE

The Dominate Move is particularly vulnerable to safety concerns, and there is detailed guidance on how to handle this on page 110.

DISABILITY AND SUPERHUMAN HEALING

Bite Marks is a game with superhuman healing, and the dominant conversation in our culture is an able-bodied one. It would be really easy to erase disabled werewolf characters as a result. This is a gentle reminder that games are more interesting when we are telling different stories. Just because able-bodied stories are the default, and superhuman healing exists in this game, doesn't mean that werewolves with disabilities don't exist or that they are not also badass!





SYSTEM

OVERVIEW

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

- ⌋ Players do things in the game by making Moves (see page 29), which usually means rolling dice to see how things go.
- ⌋ There are Basic Moves (see page 107) that everyone can do; Skin Moves (see the Skins on page 127) that only some people can do; and Pack Moves (see page 160) which you can only do together.
- ⌋ Players each have a Skin (see page 127) which describes what kind of werewolf character they are, what kind of drama they'll be wrestling with, and what Moves only they can make.
- ⌋ There's a set of player Principles (see page 27) which help guide you to the style of play that works best for *Bite Marks*
- ⌋ The MC also has their own Principles (see page 36) and Moves (see page 49). The MC does not roll the dice, but act when the players' rolls demand it, or when the fictional situation calls for it.
- ⌋ The MC helps to set up and run interesting situations that will bring out the tensions in the pack and/or drive home threats to the pack. They don't plan it all out in advance, they make it up as they go – same as the players.

PLAYER PRINCIPLES

When you are playing *Bite Marks* play to these Principles:

- Ⓒ **Act like a wolf** – don't hold back. Seize life by the throat; drink the marrow from its bones.
- Ⓒ **Pack is family and family matters** – Pack are your rivals, lovers, childhood friends, parents and siblings. Point your Moves at the Pack, bring them into scenes and make them a part of your story. Have strong feelings and opinions on your Packmates' actions – express those opinions loudly and often.
- Ⓒ **Respect your Alpha** – for as long as they deserve it.
- Ⓒ **Play vulnerable** – expose your underbelly. Share emotions, share feelings, care what the Pack thinks of you.

When you are playing the Alpha this is your additional principle:

- Ⓒ **You are the Alpha, act like it** – protect, lead, guide and punish the Pack. Give them Orders, get respect, uphold the Traditions.

The more time you spend speaking as your character, the better *Bite Marks* will be. Deep conversation is where the meat of this game lies, not narrating in the third person.



PLAYER V. PLAYER

Bite Marks is a game which is, in part, player v. player. This means that the game encourages the players into conflict with each other: emotionally, mentally, and physically. It also gives the players tools and mechanics in the form of Moves which they can use on each other in hostile and other ways. This is why it is so important that the MC and the players establish a really strongly bound group. It is a group which needs to withstand a lot of in-fighting.

You may have encountered player v. player dynamics in other settings. Maybe an adventuring party who completed a quest as a team, and find out later that the party thief has stolen the group's loot and disappeared into the night: leaving the rest of the party (and possibly the players) feeling hurt and betrayed and somehow like they 'lost'. Perhaps you have encountered other settings where relationships are more disposable or uniformly competitive: that is not how it works in *Bite Marks*.

The expectation for how player v. player interactions work is really important. In the adventuring party example above, the real problem is that some of the players spent the whole game thinking they were playing a team game and enjoying being in a team, whilst another player spent the whole game thinking they were individuals in competition with each other. That is two different games being played in the same space. Making player v. player interactions work in *Bite Marks* means being really clear and honest about expectations so that everyone is in the same game.

Firstly, the relationships inside a Pack are complicated, meaningful and important. Every player needs to create a character for whom Pack matters: you are definitely all playing in the same team. Secondly, while this game gives you the tools to beat up and dominate your fellow Packmates... that comes with consequences. The morning after, you will need to face your actions, justify them or make amends, and salvage your relationships.

MOVES

As described above, you do things in *Bite Marks* by making Moves.

Most Moves require you to roll two six-sided dice (d6 for short) then add (or subtract) your relevant stat as stated in the Move. Sometimes you will add additional points to this roll, e.g. if you have Ties, +1s from previous Moves, or Pack Pool. This gives you the result of your roll. Compare this number to the instructions in the Move to find out what happens next.

In almost all cases the Moves are based off one of the following stats:

- ☾ **Teeth** – fighting, dominating, physical stuff
- ☾ **Feral** – being in tune with your inner wolf
- ☾ **Heart** – emotional stuff, reading situations/people
- ☾ **Guts** – disobeying orders, acting against the best interests of the Pack, acting against your nature



You make a Move by either narrating your character taking the action that triggers the Move or, if the move is conversation based, playing your part of that conversation. E.g. you make the Move "Spill" by speaking as your character and telling a Packmate something vulnerable about your character.

The Moves also contain the instructions for how to resolve your actions; so when you make the Move, follow the instructions.

PACK POOL

Pack Pool can be spent to provide assistance to Move rolls, and to use powerful Pack Moves.

In order to spend the points:

- 1 You must be acting with at least one other Packmate (including NPC Packmates), and
- 2 You must be acting in accordance with the Traditions and the wishes/orders of the Alpha.

An assist can be provided by a player after a Move has been rolled. The assisting player says what they are doing to help the player making the Move, and can then spend between 1 and 3 points of Pack Pool to boost that Move. Spending 1 point of Pack Pool gives a +1 to the Move up to a max of +3 (or until the Pack Pool is exhausted – whichever comes first).

You can also spend Pack Pool on using powerful Pack Moves described on page 160. In such a situation the player characters involved in the scene will agree between themselves whether or not to spend the Pack Pool.

When the orders of the Alpha and the Traditions conflict then the Pack Pool cannot be spent and Pack Moves cannot be used. This conflict threatens the stability of the Pack: and when the stability of the Pack is threatened, they can no longer work so effectively as a team.

Pack Pool is refreshed when the Packmates display and resolve their emotions using Moves such as Spill. These are scenes in which the Packmates process, discuss, and demonstrate their emotions through conversation.

TIES

Ties represent the emotional attachments and baggage between PCs. These Ties create mechanical emotional leverage that you can spend on the Moves that you make against other PCs. Ties are not created with NPCs (even NPC Packmates).

You can spend 1 Tie on a character to gain +1 to a roll when making a Move against that character. You can have up to 3 Ties on the same PC at one time, and so spend up to 3 points to boost a single dice roll.

Ties are spent after you have made and rolled the Move.



If you have more than one Tie on the same PC then you can choose how many Ties you want to spend on the roll: 0, 1, 2, or 3. Erase the number of Ties spent.

You cannot have more than 3 Ties on the same PC. If you gain a 4th Tie then mark a circle on the Wolf Track or the Human Track (your choice which) and reset your Ties against that PC to +1.

WOLF AND HUMAN PATHS

Each Skin has a Wolf Path and a Human Path consisting of two tracks of three circles. Marking these tracks enables your character to progress, change, and gain extra skills by taking Advances – discrete improvements to your character's abilities. When the rules call for you to mark a Path, you must choose the Path for the form you were in when you took the action that triggered it. If you were in human form then mark the Human Path; if you were in wolf form then mark the Wolf Path. You must fill both Paths to gain an Advance.

Mark Paths when:

- ☾ you play to your Heartbeats;
- ☾ you display your Pack Culture;
- ☾ you gain a fourth Tie against the same PC;
- ☾ you share a moment of heartfelt camaraderie; and
- ☾ when a Skin Move tells you to.

You can only mark a total of two circles (from either path) in a single scene.

If you are asked to mark a circle but the relevant Path is full then don't mark a circle.

When both Paths are full, erase all marks on both Paths and choose an Advance to add to your sheet.

Advances are:

- ☾ Add +1 to any stat (up to a max of +3 to a stat in total, including your starting number).
- ☾ Choose a new Move from your skin.
- ☾ Choose a Move from another skin.

You may take five advances in total. When you are ready to take your sixth advance you should retire your character and create a new character.





FENRIR UNBOUND
LONDON MC

MCING

BITE MARKS

MCING *BITE MARKS*

MC PRINCIPLES

MCing *Bite Marks* is about pitting the Pack against one another, pushing their relationships to breaking point and providing just enough external threats to remind them they are family, forcing them back together.

The Prodigal Skin exemplifies this. The Prodigal is a wolf who has broken with the Pack, they left for a new life outside... and yet something brings them back. One command from the Alpha, one plea from their best friend, a sense of duty... whatever the reason, the Prodigal always returns. The story of the Prodigal is the story of *Bite Marks*.

There are 8 principles that make a *Bite Marks* game.

- 1 Drive wedges between the Packmates
- 2 Threaten the Pack into unity
- 3 Make space for the Packmates to express themselves
- 4 Make the world smell real
- 5 Make the PCs feel badass
- 6 Reinforce Pack culture and Traditions
- 7 Offer situations not plot
- 8 Make it hurt!

The game primarily cycles between Principles 1 and 2 in terms of the action – you should be constantly looking for situations which drive the Pack apart and drive them back together. The other principles support those actions to make sure you are getting the balance right and helping the players to fully express and feel their characters.

DRIVE WEDGES BETWEEN THE PACKMATES

This principle is about building tension between the Packmates, exploiting it, and exploding it to create drama. Take every opportunity to heighten the strength of feeling in a scene, so that the tension has maximum impact. Give the Packmates plenty of reasons to confront, challenge, and come to crisis in their relationships. There is more detailed advice on how to make this Principle come alive on page 80.

THREATEN THE PACK INTO UNITY

This is perhaps the easiest of the MC Principles, since most people who have run games before are familiar with giving PCs challenges or putting them under threat. Things are no different here save that the threats should be aimed the Pack as a whole, so that they have the effect of pulling the Pack together – e.g. a threat that targets the territory of the Pack or the most loved Pack member.

Check out the Werewolf Lore section on (page 103) for possible threats, and don't forget to use the dangers generated by the players during world creation. Keep the threats rolling, and press the Pack hard with

them – especially when it looks like the Pack might be about to split apart under the weight of the difficult relationships. Then, pause the action from the threats in order to give the PCs the chance to have their heartfelt confessional conversations and recover Pack Pool.

The amount of Pack Pool should give you a great indicator on when to press forward with the action and when to press pause. If the PCs have enough Pack Pool to afford a Pack Move, then threaten them hard: if their Pack Pool is low, emphasise the **untenable situations** and **tense relationships** see pages 81 and 86 and give them plenty of space to 'Spill' and 'Provoke Spill' see pages 122 and 124.



MAKE THE WORLD SMELL REAL

The job of any MC is to make the fictional world feel real and consistent. How does the MC help players suspend their disbelief and buy into and invest in your game world?

First – represent the world. It sounds simple, but most of the information about the world will come from the MC. On the most basic level you are filling in the gaps around the PCs. Unless a Move tells a player to create something external to their character or you ask them a question, it is up to the MC to describe the world. Players may create broad areas they are interested in – a local community they struggle to hide in, a home where the Pack live, a rival Pack who attacked them – but it is up to you to make that feel solid and real. Don't forget, you can do this by asking the Players questions to re-distribute the creative input e.g. what does the manor look like?

This is also a game about werewolves – so yes, describe the world as it appears to the human eye, but make sure you also describe what it is like for a wolf's nose. Don't limit your descriptions to human perceived smells either – emotions have scent; werewolves, people and Packs could all have signature scents. A wolf may smell a bit like their creator, or like their Alpha, or like something else entirely.





If you want to make something seem friendly, describe the scent in a way which is enticing and pleasant – warm, honeyed, spiced, clean, fresh, woody.

If you want to make something seem threatening, describe the scent as something unpleasant – bitter, filthy, cloying, overwhelming, rotten, dead, stale.

If you want to make something seem mysterious, describe the scent as something unrecognisable or absent – new, unfamiliar, unknown, shifting, familiar but you can't place it, no scent at all.

WILL OUR CHARACTERS BE NAKED?

Somebody always asks this question.

This is the answer...

Yes. Yes, you will probably be naked when you change forms. No, it won't be an important part of the game. This is a game about battling the inner beast, kicking ass, tortured, guilty people and their troubled relationships. It isn't a game of 'let's laugh and point at the naked person'.

There is nothing fun or interesting or exciting about playing people hiding naked in the shadows waiting to steal wildly inappropriate, badly-fitting clothes from a shop mannequin. MC it is your job to reassure the players this frustrating comedy won't be their experience of *Bite Marks*.

You don't have to describe everything that the PCs might see, hear or smell. The human brain takes in a ridiculous amount of information every second, and you could never hope to replicate that in a description of a scene. So aim for just two things – enough information to give the impression of a scene, to make it come alive; AND the information which it is important for the players (not necessarily the PCs) to notice.

EXAMPLE

The room is bare, lined with dust and cold. The scent trails are mostly faint and old. The heating hasn't been turned on in at least a week and it is the middle of winter. There are almost no personal effects apart from a cheap exercise book, covered in frantic writing – and a lingering, bitter stink of fear.

This description quickly establishes a room which hasn't been occupied in some time. Saying there is nothing personal here except an exercise book 'stinking of fear' marks out the notebook as the most important thing in the room.



MAKE SPACE FOR THE PACKMATES TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES



This is the simplest and yet the hardest Principle to master, as it requires the MC to do nothing. But the MC needs to do nothing 'at the right time', and that takes practice. As a rule of thumb, don't stop, pause or break for an emotional 'chat' in the middle of a big action scene: but if there is a natural lull, give the players a few seconds to jump in with a conversation. Even better, create lulls between action scenes, and explicitly ask if there are any conversations that the PCs want to have (either with each other or NPCs). You will get better at predicting when to pause for conversation as time goes on – in the meantime, keep checking in with them.

In a pause, resist the temptation to move the story on; don't fill in the silence with your descriptions or Moves. Wait. Give the PCs the chance to dive in and start rows, confess secrets, lose themselves to lust, challenge authority, or hurt each other.

Never make the PCs feel like they need to hurry up a conversation to get back to the action. Conversational, emotional scenes are just as important as everything else. But we need to treat them like they are more important than everything else, because the general culture of role-playing is that we race through those scenes and prioritise the dice rolling. Slow it down. Make space.

Even better – remind the PCs about conversations they may want to have. Say *"Hey, Jeremy, don't forget you wanted to tell the Alpha they went 'too fucking far this time' with that prisoner! Now would be a great time for that."* This shows that you value making space for conversations, and reminds players who might have forgotten something important, either between sessions or because they too are caught up in the action.

MAKE THE PCS FEEL BADASS.

PCs should feel like cool badass werewolves by the end of every session. Make the PCs feel awesome, charismatic and powerful, and attractive to those around them, by reinforcing all the positives of being a werewolf. This makes it far more devastating when you remind the players of the damage and havoc the wolf can also wreak.

How do you make the PCs feel powerful? Some suggestions are:

- Ⓒ Present the PCs with some enemies and challenges they can easily crush, and let the players describe how they do it with no roll required;
- Ⓒ Allow them to successfully complete superhuman tests of strength, speed, agility, and stamina with ease; and
- Ⓒ Have human NPCs react positively to the PCs even when they are in human form – werewolves will be magnetic and vital, and humans will find themselves drawn to that.

The same goes for other NPC werewolves. Werewolves NEVER feel neutral about other werewolves – they will usually want to fight, swear friendship, or fuck. It is common in games to present NPCs as



antagonistic to the players; but this is your chance to present NPCs who do something more. Create NPCs who want to befriend the PCs, hero-worship them, have romantic entanglements (or perhaps just sex) with them, who want to be protected by them, who want to be submissive to them and just do as they are told.

REINFORCE PACK CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

The MC can and should do things to embed Pack Culture in the out-of-character culture at the gaming table.

- Ⓒ Have the NPC Packmates displaying elements of Pack Culture as often as possible.
- Ⓒ Remind the players as necessary that when displaying Pack Culture they will get to tick off circles on the Wolf Track or the Human Track to gain advances.
- Ⓒ Use the slang created in the Pack Playbook section when discussing the game out-of-character. Making it part of your gaming group's social language means it will come more naturally in character, and your group will feel closer as a result.
- Ⓒ Use Pack Culture to heighten the emotional tension with former and estranged NPC Packmates. Show the players their shared culture reflected in someone who is no longer Pack. Point it out, perhaps by describing how the clothes of the former Packmate look so much like your own in style, only shabbier and uncared for.
- Ⓒ If the Alpha is a PC – ask them to sit at the head of the table.

OFFER SITUATIONS NOT PLOTS

As MC your job is not to create fully-realised plot. Your job is to listen to what the players create (this will tell you what they are interested in), then generate untenable situations, poke at tense relationships, and present threats. As the game continues, an MC should recycle and reincorporate what the PCs do in the game to create new untenable situations, new tense relationships, and advance existing or bring in new threats. See pages 81 and 86 for advice on untenable situations and tense relationships.

Never pre-judge the outcome of a situation, relationship or threat. The players will and should surprise and delight you with what they do. If you do try to force pre-planned MC plot into the game, you will find that the system will grind it up and make your life incredibly hard work. This game was never under your control to begin with: it is best to remember that.

Let's talk about how situations are different to plots. A situation is a starting premise e.g. there is a Pack Tradition that all first-born female children will be raised by the Pack: a werewolf and her human wife have just had a newborn baby girl in secret. A baby which should be taken away from the human world and raised apart from her human mother. A plot would be predetermining how the secret might be revealed and the fallout from that revelation; but we don't need to do that all that. As MC you just want to set up a compelling situation, have an idea of the relevant NPC personalities involved, and then find out how the consequences fall, along with the players.



MAKE IT HURT!

This is about giving the game emotional bite. There is a large section on how to do this on page 80: but in summary, help the players feel invested in the game, make sure that the fiction has big emotional stakes, find the fault lines and pressure points in tense relationships and untenable situations, and explode them at the most dramatic moments.

MC MOVES

These Moves are the direct actions the MC makes in response to the Players. These Moves should make the Principles come alive and drive the cycle of forcing wedges between the PCs and threatening them back into unity. MC Moves should follow what is happening in the fiction. Use the Soft Moves to signal what is going on in the world and to highlight untenable situations, and use the Hard Moves to make those situations dangerous, urgent and even irrevocable.

Soft Moves show the players something that they will probably need to deal with eventually. Hard Moves change 'eventually' to NOW!

MC should use Soft Moves whenever they like and whenever it feels appropriate.

Use Hard Moves:

- ⌋ When the players make roll a miss (6 or below) on a Move.
- ⌋ If the players keep ignoring Soft Moves pointing at the same threat (for example, if you have shown evidence of Hunters in the area three times and the Players are still taking no action, then make a Hard Move).
- ⌋ If the fiction demands it.

Here are some examples of Soft and Hard Moves:

SOFT MOVES

- ⌋ Sow discord in the Pack, push on the wedges between the packmates
- ⌋ Offer an opportunity with or without a cost
- ⌋ Foreshadow a threat
- ⌋ Tempt Packmates to break Traditions/Disobey orders
- ⌋ Highlight a threat or an untenable situation
- ⌋ Reveal someone's resentment, anger, shame, fear, lust, love

HARD MOVES

- ⌋ If the Alpha is an NPC – have them punish someone violently
- ⌋ If the Alpha is a PC – give them a horrible choice
- ⌋ Separate the Pack violently
- ⌋ Inflict Harm
- ⌋ Have the Pack discovered
- ⌋ Explode an untenable situation
- ⌋ Kill a beloved NPC
- ⌋ Put someone in immediate danger

Overleaf are some further details on using the Example Moves

SOFT MOVE

EXAMPLES

Sow discord in the Pack

- ⌋ Highlight the wedges between the Packmates, by reminding them of the fights and situations which have caused estrangements
- ⌋ Have NPCs openly disagree with PCs and/or the Alpha
- ⌋ Have NPCs challenge the PCs' behaviour, motives, and actions.
- ⌋ Have NPCs point out tension in Pack relationships
- ⌋ Have NPCs be vulnerable with the PCs – share secrets and confidences, and ask for help where that help puts the PCs at odds with each other
- ⌋ Throw PCs together so that they have to resolve their issues
- ⌋ Have NPCs give their opinions on the tense relationships

Offer an opportunity with or without a cost

- ⌋ Have an NPC offer or ask for information
- ⌋ Have an NPC offer or ask for a favour
- ⌋ Show the players an enemy in a position of weakness that they could exploit
- ⌋ Offer the PCs greater security if they do something cruel

SOFT MOVE	EXAMPLES
Foreshadow a Threat	☾ Have them hear rumours of werewolf hunters or a rival pack in the area ☾ NPCs report that someone has been asking for the Pack at their usual haunts ☾ The lair smells wrong, like someone else has been here ☾ They hear the sound of a gun being cocked and see the glint of moonlight on metal (the next Move would be 'inflict harm' if no-one takes action before then)
Tempt them to break Traditions/Disobey orders	☾ Make it impossible for a PC to obey a Tradition without doing things against their nature, hurting those they love, or taking actions which are morally wrong or deeply unjust ☾ Have a Tradition demand or create consequences which are arbitrary, unfair, or unreasonable ☾ Have an NPC Alpha give unreasonable, terse, and/or immoral orders: don't explain the reasons for them, and have NPCs behave as if PCs won't question them





HARD MOVE	EXAMPLES
Highlight an untenable situation	☾ Recycle an NPC who features in an untenable situation – remind the players they exist, make them important to the PCs ☾ Have NPCs comment on untenable situations ☾ Reveal the consequences for a character (PC or NPC) of the untenable situation going unresolved
If the Alpha is an NPC – have them do something terrible	☾ Enforce a Tradition that will hurt a lot of people ☾ Punish someone harshly for breaking a tradition (exile, mutilation, death) ☾ Show the Alpha bullying or being violent
If the Alpha is a PC – give them a horrible choice	☾ Give them an NPC to discipline or risk losing control of the Pack – either physical beating or exile or similar ☾ Make the Alpha choose whether to uphold an unjust Tradition, or risk the consequences
Separate the Pack	☾ Have a Packmate captured, trapped, or cut off ☾ Have the Pack facing urgent threats in two different locations ☾ Pick off the weakest Packmate – have them killed, captured, bullied, compromised, or tortured



HARD MOVE

EXAMPLES

Inflict Harm	Have someone (or several someones) wounded in a fight, get caught in a collapsing building, etc.
Threaten them with discovery	- Have them captured on video, seen by members of the public, or other evidence of unfeasible wild animal attacks found by the authorities - Have human NPCs close to Packmates stumble upon evidence of their secret - Have werewolf hunters find the Pack
Threaten them with their nature	- Have NPC wolves lose control, be horribly violent, kill innocents, hunt human beings and eat them. - If PCs roll a miss on the "Give In To The Wolf" Move – have the PCs be horribly violent, kill innocents, hunt, torture, and eat human beings
Explode an untenable situation	This depends entirely on the untenable situations you have been building up, but don't forget to follow the MC principles: see page 36.
NPC Dominate	Have an NPC werewolf attempt to dominate a PC, forcing the PC to make the Disobey Move

These are not exhaustive, because there may always be a perfect Move for the fiction which isn't on the lists. But this should give you a clear idea of the difference between Hard and Soft Moves and a general steer on what to do.

GIVE IN TO THE WOLF - THE HARD MOVE

If a player uses the Move – Give in to the Wolf, and they roll a miss, then the MC makes a Hard Move. That Hard Move means you will control the character for the rest of the scene and they are not in control of the wolf. Firstly it is essential that you abide by all the of safety rules, remind the players about the X-card, remember the banned list, and use the same rules about sex and suicide as are stated in the Dominate safety section (see page 111).

Otherwise this is your chance to show the players what happens when the wolf is in control. Make it bloody and violent: maybe the wolf can't tell the difference between friend and foe, they may eat a human, breach a tradition or taboo, perhaps they make the change in a public place, or simply run off into danger alone and unprotected.

It is possible for a player to use the Dominate Move to force the other player back into control.

HOW HARD SHOULD A HARD MOVE BE?

In *Bite Marks* the PCs have a greater ability to take and heal damage and inflict harm than you may be used to in other PBTA games. The system of Pack Pool and Pack Moves also give the Pack a lot of options to defeat foes. The Pack can take a lot of punishment from the MC, so consider that when creating threats and making hard Moves. Remember when the Pack Pool is high enough that they can start buying Pack Moves, you can hit them really hard.

CUSTOM MOVES

It is always open to the MC to create Custom Moves for their particular game, especially if your group has created a setting that calls for it.

Custom Moves that remove even more agency from the players (like Dominate and Give into the Wolf do in the Basic Moves) should be carefully considered and agreed with your group in advance, so that the game isn't unbalanced too far.

Here is an example of a Custom Move created by Josh Fox for a game in which the werewolf pack guarded the human world against monstrous threats in the wood – threats named only as THEM.

EXAMPLE

When you listen to THEM, roll +Guts.

On a **10+** choose two, on a **7–9**, choose one:

- Ⓒ Extend your senses and learn a secret
- Ⓒ Strengthen the pack, gaining 2 Pack Pool
- Ⓒ Strengthen yourself, gain an additional option when you next “Give In To The Wolf”

0–6 THEY hold 1 and can spend it to make you roll to Disobey or lose control of the wolf and attack a target of their choice.

HARM RULES

Bite Marks is a world of tooth and claw. There will be a lot of violence.

Harm is how you keep track of how much damage has been taken by PCs and NPCs.

When someone makes a successful attack, calculate the Harm suffered as follows:

- 1 Work out the Attacker's Harm total. This is the weapon's Harm rating (see table below) plus any bonuses from Move;
- 2 Add up the Defender's Armour total;
- 3 Then subtract the Defender's Armour total from the Attacker's Harm total.
- 4 The final figure is applied as Harm to the Defender.
- 5 PCs who take Harm must then make the Harm Move (see below).

If a weapon in the table is listed as Armour Piercing (ap) then ignore the Armour. Instead the Attacker's Harm total is applied in full as Harm.

If a PC would suffer Harm in a situation where there is no attack e.g. illness, drowning etc. then the MC should refer to the Harm table to calculate the likely Harm.

With NPCs, it's up to the MC to decide how much Harm they can take, in line with the fictional situation and how tough the NPC is. Most NPCs will die after taking 2–3 Harm, maybe 4–5 if they are very tough e.g. a super badass NPC werewolf, or if they are wearing Armour.

For PCs mark off a phase of the moon for each point of Harm dealt to the Defender.

The first three phases represent the least serious damage. Phases 4–6 represent more serious damage. If a PC marks off the 9th phase, they die unless they are in Wolf Form. If they are in Wolf Form when the 9th phase is marked then the PC will can mark past the 9th by up to two more points before they die.

When a PC inflicts Harm on a Packmate, that Packmate gets a +1 Tie on the PC.

Because the PCs are werewolves and werewolves are tough as hell, when they return from Wolf Form they at once heal up to 3 phases (unless a Move says otherwise). See the Healing Section below for more detail.



EXAMPLE

Marta is a PC werewolf, she has been badly attacked by a rival pack and is in Wolf Form. She has marked off all her moon phases up to and including the 9th and taken a further +1 Harm when rolling her Harm Move (see below). If she had been in Human Form she would have been dead as soon as she marked off the 9th phase.

The rival pack leaves her for dead, and just before she passes out Marta changes back to Human Form. This change allows her to heal 3 phases. The first phase healed is the extra +1 Harm that took her past the 9th phase. The next two points of healing take her to the 7th phase: she is going to need healing, and fast, because her wounds are not stable and she could bleed out. But she is alive.

HARM MOVE

When a PC suffers Harm, the MC may ask them to make a Harm Move. If so then the player rolls +Guts.

0–6 MC can choose one of these:

- ☾ The PC is out of the action, unconscious or trapped.
- ☾ The PC takes an additional +1 Harm.
- ☾ The PC involuntarily changes form and may not change back for the remainder of the scene.

7–9 a PC must choose Fight or Flight. If the PC chooses Flight then they must leave the scene. If they choose Fight the MC can choose one of these:

- ☞ Lose your footing.
- ☞ Lose your grip on something/someone.
- ☞ Lose track of something/someone important.
- ☞ You miss noticing something important.

10+ the PC can choose: either nothing happens, or take –1 Harm and the MC chooses 1 thing from the 7–9 list (you cannot choose Flight).

WEAPON	HARM RATING
Untrained combat (PC are untrained when in human form unless they have a background that says otherwise), grappling, restraining	0
Trained unarmed combat, starvation (ap)	1
Wolf claws and teeth (ap), knife, blunt weapons (baseball bat etc.), crossbow bolt (ap)	2
Handgun, shotgun, trapped in a fire (ap)	3
Automatic gun fire, being hit full-on by a car (ap), being skinned, life-threatening illness	4
Centre of a big explosion (ap), drowning (ap) decapitation etc.	5

HEALING

There are four ways to heal:

- ⌋ Unassisted healing through the passage of time.
- ⌋ If someone makes a successful Healing Move on you.
- ⌋ Changing from Wolf Form to Human Form.
- ⌋ Hospital time or equivalent.

UNASSISTED HEALING

- ⌋ Harm marked up to and including the 3rd phase will heal by itself in time.
- ⌋ Harm marked from the 4th to 6th phases won't get worse or better on its own. It is stable.
- ⌋ Harm marked from the 7th phase onwards will get worse over time unless it is stabilised.
- ⌋ Stabilised Harm will not get better or worse, but the Harm will need treatment to be removed.

HEALING MOVES

The Prodigal and the Greypelt skins have a Move which can heal. Follow the instructions on the Skin to execute that Move.

CHANGING FORM HEALING

When a PC changes from Wolf Form to Human Form they may heal up to 3 moon phases automatically. If, after healing, the moon phase track is back down to 0 then nothing more needs to be done. If the phase is not 0 then refer to the above Unassisted Healing list with the PC's new moon phase, and proceed either with a Healing Move or Unassisted Healing rules as needed.

Healing using change from Wolf Form only applies once per set of injuries. If a PC had a big fight taking multiple wounds then when they change back to human form they may heal and stabilise 3 phases automatically. But that PC couldn't then flip back and forth between forms until everything was healed. Although if they still had damage from the previous fight which they had changed forms to heal, and a few scenes later took a shotgun blast in another fight, then they could change forms again to gain the healing ability for the new damage. MC should use their discretion about what is an appropriate gap of time.

HOSPITAL TIME

Spending a period of time in hospital or being treated by a doctor (or even a vet!) can heal a PC (how much they are healed will be a decision for the MC depending on what is happening in the fiction). However the MC will always exact a price: perhaps the existence of werewolves will be revealed to a human, perhaps you are in enemy pack territory and stuck there for a few hours.



SETTING UP THE GAME

SETTING UP THE GAME

The stories told in *Bite Marks* are stories about the Pack, the Packmates and what is important to them. We need to work out who and what the Pack are about before the stories can start. But if your players need to define the world or elements of the world, such as time period, before they make their characters, then leap to that section on page 70 as needed.

The MC should guide the player group through each of the following sections to create all the characters, emotional relationships, and challenges you will need to build your stories. The MC's role is to ask lots of questions fleshing out the world, the PCs and NPCs. Take notes on your MC crib sheet of anything which could be an **untenable situation**, a **tense relationship**, or a **threat** that could, somehow, blow up in the players' faces!

The sections are:

- ⌋ Making Characters
- ⌋ Making a Pack
- ⌋ Making Relationships
- ⌋ Making a World

MAKING CHARACTERS

Take turns to read through the italicised description of each Skin. Each player then chooses a Skin. Each Skin can only be taken by one player, so if two players want the same one, you'll need to discuss it and someone switch to a different one. MC, you may want to ask each player why they want that particular Skin, and then suggest an alternative that might deliver a similar result for them.

Now each player completes their Skin. They should pick a name and three Heartbeats, and think a little about what their character looks like, their personality and how they feel both about the wolf inside and about being Pack.

Remind players that this is a game exploring the emotional life of a Pack. How a PC feels about the wolf and how they feel about the Pack will be vital touchstones for how the player portrays the character's emotional responses. The same is often true for playing NPCs.

Each skin comes with a list of pre-generated stats. The players need to add a +1 to one of those stats, and choose their Moves.

That is most of the character done.

Do not fill in the "Packmates" section yet. We will come back to that. First fill in some details about the Pack in the Pack Playbook. This will allow the group to get a sense of how the Pack works and what its culture is. That will help everyone come up with awesome ideas for the Packmate questions on their Skins.



MAKING A PACK

You want to make the Pack feel like a Pack from the start of character creation. Part of this game depends on the MC deliberately bonding the players both in and out of character. Players can then bring those feelings and emotions into their portrayals of the Packmates in a way which is satisfying and honest.

First ask the players about the Alpha. Is this an NPC or a PC? How does the character of the Pack reflect the personality of the leader OR are they currently leaderless and adrift?

Next you will want to create 1–2 NPC Packmates, and give them a rough personality and a name. There is more detail on how to use them on page 79.

Now it is time to fill out the Pack playbook: this will explore what the Pack is like, and will cover areas such as Slang and Culture and Traditions.

Culture is vital to the Pack. Shared culture tells us who is in the Pack and who is outside it on a subconscious, behavioural level. Using the same slang, fashion, or even modes of transport (e.g. everyone is a biker) will give the PCs a common frame of reference and a way to identify with each other. The Pack Playbook is key to creating that sense of shared identity.

SLANG

You should agree five items of slang which you are encouraged to use in and out of character. There are some suggestions below but feel free to come up with your own.

COMMON CONCEPTS	SUGGESTED SLANG
Werewolves	wolves, weres, kin, lupines, loups
Insults	mutts, dogs, mangy, mongrel, beast, rabid, coyote/fox (means 'too clever for their own good'), lap dog, cur, 'good boy', stick fetcher, rabbit, rabid
Humans	tenders, prey, smoothskins, dinner, tames, furless
Changing from human to werewolf	the change, the transformation, putting on fur
The first time you change from human to werewolf	the harrowing, the becoming, the forging
The relationship between a new werewolf and the one who made them	sire, progeny, child
The act of making a werewolf	the bite, the gift,
Rituals	communion (eating as a Pack, presided over by the Alpha), Blood hunt, Moon hunt, First blood
A new werewolf	cub, pup, youngling (could also be used as an insult to an older werewolf)
The leader of a werewolf pack	alpha, the dominant, boss

CULTURE

You will also need agreed items of culture. These should be things it is fairly easy to demonstrate or refer to in play, so don't make them too complicated. Here are some examples:

- ⌋ The Pack always hunts together every full moon.
- ⌋ The Alpha is always offered the best prey from a hunt.
- ⌋ Everyone waits for the Alpha to eat first at dinner.
- ⌋ Estranged Packmates eat sitting on the floor, not at the table
- ⌋ Table seating arrangements are according to Pack status.
- ⌋ The Alpha serves everyone food from a communal plate.
- ⌋ Dress Codes e.g. biker gang, suits, lumberjack chick, 1950s housewives, sweats and gym gear.
- ⌋ Physical closeness e.g. platonic hugging, touching, sparring, falling asleep together, and rough-housing.
- ⌋ Looking in someone's eyes is a challenge.
- ⌋ Showing your neck is being submissive and respectful.
- ⌋ Everyone has a tattoo/brand of the Pack symbol.
- ⌋ Werewolves mate for life.
- ⌋ Once a year on the Blue Moon there is a meeting, under truce, of all the Packs.

TRADITIONS

These are the unwritten laws of the Pack that bind everyone together.

When people have sacrificed something to uphold the rules, this becomes an important part of their identity. As MC, use Traditions to put the Pack under political and emotional pressure.

These are rules which are intended to *never* be broken, so come up with things it would be really cool and dramatic to break. Because someone is going to break one of these at some point!

- | | |
|--|--|
| Ⓒ No-one may create a new werewolf without the Alpha's permission. | Ⓒ Any human who discovers the secret of werewolves must be killed. |
| Ⓒ Only the Alpha may create a new werewolf. | Ⓒ Never kill another werewolf. |
| Ⓒ Relationships with humans must be disposable. | Ⓒ Never hunt a human. |
| Ⓒ When a Pack member needs help, you must give it. | Ⓒ No mating outside the Pack. |
| | Ⓒ Never eat another werewolf. |
| | Ⓒ Never lose control of the wolf. |

Note: some of these Traditions cut across Moves which require a Player Character to do those things... that is deliberate! Traditions are there to make things messy and complicated: the messier the better.

Players should decide on 2–3 Pack Traditions and then the MC must ask: Which of you has already broken one of the Traditions, and which of you is keeping their secret...for now?

MAKING RELATIONSHIPS

A Pack is built on relationships: good, bad, healthy, shifting, toxic maybe but always powerful. As MC your job is to ensure the players are creating these sorts of relationships.

Remind the players that the opinion of their Packmates matters more than almost anything else. Pack is the only place they can be truly understood and accepted, loved and hated in equal measure. Packmates are the only people who are like them.

In each Skin there is a section marked "Packmates" which contains loaded questions for the players to answer. Each question points at another player – although the detail of the answer can involve other NPCs (both Pack and non-Pack, human and werewolf) and PCs. E.g. the question might be 'who did I betray' – Becky asks this question of Mo, Mo suggests that Becky (playing the Enforcer) killed Mo's PC's human parents, on the orders of the current Alpha. The question creates a direct and difficult secret relationship between Becky and Mo's characters but involves other parties as well.

Go around the table inviting each player to answer their question or ask it of another player as appropriate. As they do so, draw a rough map of their answers, with arrows going from the person who owns the Skin to other characters that the answers have created a relationship with. This map will show you if each player has some interesting connections to

other Packmates, and whether the Pack as a whole is well connected with no isolate sub-groups. If not, then suggest alternative player-to-player combinations for the questions, to ensure that everyone has an approximately equal number of powerful relationships. Players should note their answers down in the Who You Got Ties On section of their character sheet; or the back of the sheet, if there isn't enough space.

Allocate Ties according to the instructions in the questions.

MC, you'll want to keep a copy of this map for your prep.

The best answers to the questions are those which create a tense relationship, a threat, and/or an untenable situation. Secrets are excellent at this point in character creation as long as you remember Annison's Second Rule* (which applies to MCs and Players alike):

'The point of a secret is to fling it in another PC's face at the most dramatic moment.'

Many untenable situations will be exploded purely by revealing secrets to the wrong (or perhaps the right) people. As MC you should be again noting down any details, facts or information from this process which will give you ideas about untenable situations to exploit when you get a Hard Move, or ways to increase tensions between the characters.

*Annison's First Rule is 'when GMing hold off from talking for a few moments more than you are comfortable with'. See 'When the Dark is Gone', in the *Seven Wonders* anthology by Pelgrane Press.



MAKING A WORLD

In every game you want the world to feel real; you want the Pack to feel invested in their surroundings and under pressure. The world should be created jointly by the MC and the players, but with the MC acting in a facilitator role.

Agree enough background information that everyone is on the same page at the start of the game, to make the world feel real, and to signpost areas which the players are interested in developing.

- ⌋ **Territory** – describe the territory held by the Pack? What is important about it?
- ⌋ **Community** – What is the community the Pack lives in/near? Which one or two NPCs outside the Pack have a pull on the players (especially the Fixer skin!) e.g. a lover, a child, best friend etc.
- ⌋ **Threats** – what 1–2 things threaten the Pack?

Don't create so much information that you are drowning in the details and the story is concluded before it is even begun.





RUNNING THE GAME

RUNNING THE GAME

MCING THE FIRST SESSION

In the start-up phase of the game and/or first session, ask the players lots of questions.

When the PCs ask their starting relationship questions, make sure you build on those with more questions, so as to establish some tension from the start. These will form the basis of how you crack the Pack apart later on.

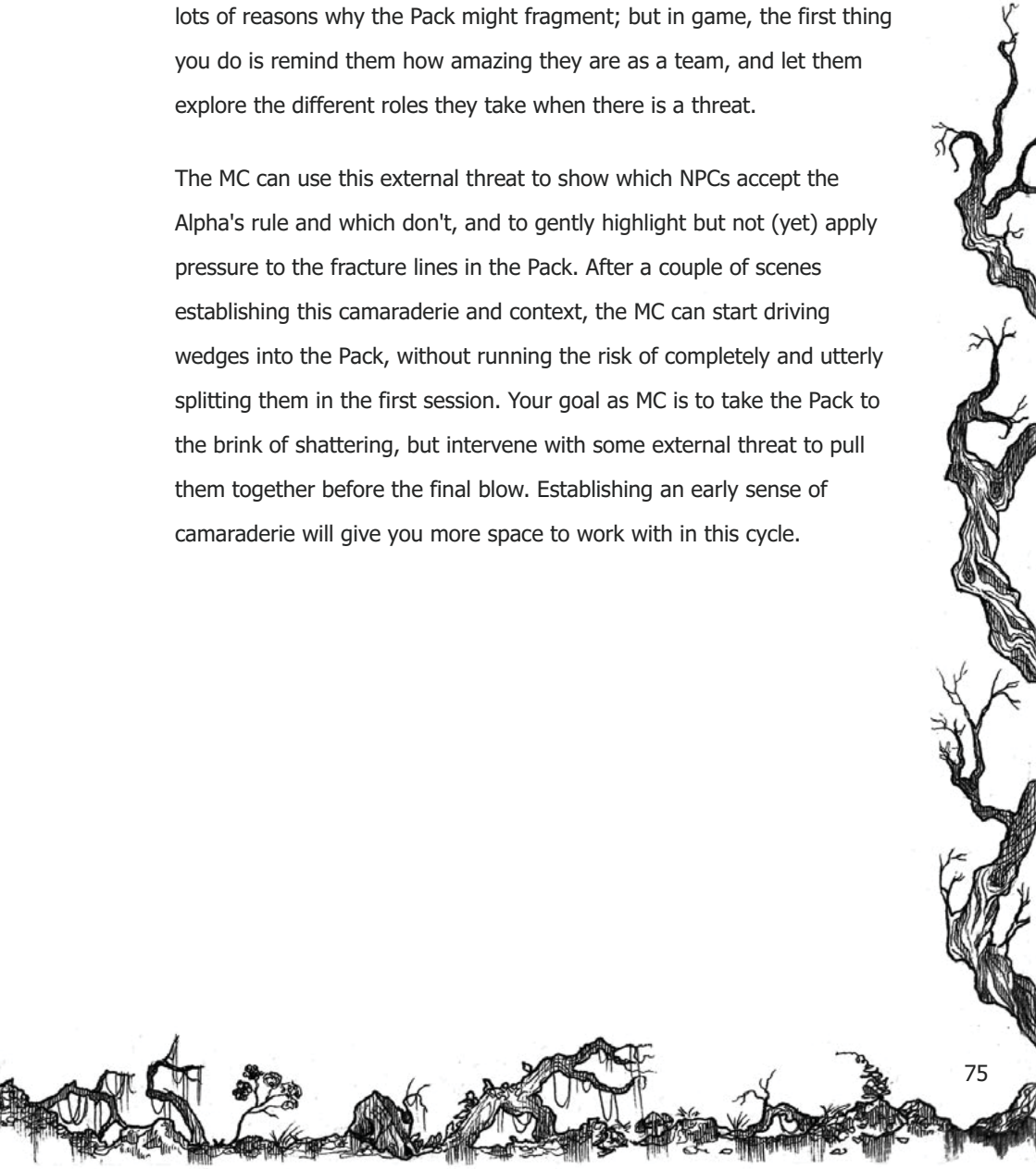
The Alpha, Howl, Cub, and Prodigal are all skins which can provoke extra questions about how leadership in the Pack works, what their spirituality is, how werewolves are created, and what forced the Prodigal to leave and what has forced them to return.

Although **threats** are external to the Pack, ask questions to see how they tie into the Pack. Who is dating a human who later turns out to be a werewolf hunter; which character is the parent/sibling/secret lover of a rival Alpha? These questions will all show you where the **tense relationships** lie and what the **untenable situations** in the Pack are. See pages 81 and 86 for more detail.

Once you have set up all the tense relationships, threats, and untenable situations it is best to start the first session with some crisis external to the Pack. Early on you want to start with the Pack doing something

positive together and showing them at their best. Requiring the Pack to come together to defend itself early on the first session can really establish the emotional pull of the Pack. In character creation, you set up lots of reasons why the Pack might fragment; but in game, the first thing you do is remind them how amazing they are as a team, and let them explore the different roles they take when there is a threat.

The MC can use this external threat to show which NPCs accept the Alpha's rule and which don't, and to gently highlight but not (yet) apply pressure to the fracture lines in the Pack. After a couple of scenes establishing this camaraderie and context, the MC can start driving wedges into the Pack, without running the risk of completely and utterly splitting them in the first session. Your goal as MC is to take the Pack to the brink of shattering, but intervene with some external threat to pull them together before the final blow. Establishing an early sense of camaraderie will give you more space to work with in this cycle.



Here are some ideas for an external crisis: but always tailor this to the threats the Players generate in the world-building section.

- ⌋ An NPC Alpha is missing/captured/killed
- ⌋ Someone is hunting and killing humans indiscriminately on Pack territory
- ⌋ Hunters are in town asking dangerous questions
- ⌋ A rival pack is either causing trouble or seeking a suspicious alliance
- ⌋ A Packmate is murdered
- ⌋ A blackmail attempt is made using a compromising video of a Packmate mid-change
- ⌋ Someone catches the scent of an old enemy

If one of the players has picked the Prodigal skin, you will also need to discuss with them when and how they return to the Pack before the session. This often provides a great start to the story.

Using an external threat also gives space to show slices of Pack life e.g. does someone need to lie to a spouse to answer the call of the Pack, etc.

PREPPING THE GAME SESSION BY SESSION

Bite Marks doesn't require a lot of prep for each session – the MC's job is not to create intricate and convoluted plots to dangle in front of the players. The MC's job is to:

- ⌚ Follow the principles
- ⌚ Look for opportunities to sharpen already tense relationships
- ⌚ Detonate the untenable situations
- ⌚ Present threats
- ⌚ Follow where the players take the story

I am not saying 'DON'T CREATE THINGS': but concentrate your creative juices on making your NPCs feel rich and real, threatening the Pack with real danger moment to moment, and presenting the players with interesting situations. Stick to thinking about setting up situations – don't plan for outcomes.

In the beginning this can be a pretty daunting aspect of *Bite Marks*. Instead of having a huge library of pre-written notes, lists of statistics for NPCs, and a flow chart of scenes to rely on, you are expected to improvise more heavily. But you can easily construct a framework of notes to help you with that improvising. A little prep will give you confidence and take you a long way in the early stages of the game without railroading your players and getting punished by the system for doing it.



Make no mistake, *Bite Marks* is a game that can punish the MC for trying to force the players to engage with specific plot in a specific way. This is because the outcomes of Moves are so directive that they will slice your 'plot' apart before you even get it started.

So what should your session by session prep contain?

- ⌋ PCs
- ⌋ NPCs
- ⌋ Untenable situations (including tense relationships)
- ⌋ Threats

PCS

Have a think about: what are they up to? what is the current state of their relationships? what areas of tension or conflict, fears, and weaknesses can you exploit or increase? Look for stuff which is stressful, and think about how to make it worse.

NPCs

Keep notes on a small number of main NPCs. Who are they? how do they tie into the PCs and/or the Pack? If NPCs don't tie into the players, then make them relevant or get rid of them. For recurring NPCs, think about their personalities, motivations, and agendas. Is there anything the PCs did last session that an NPC might call them out over? Consider what you can do to make the PCs invest in those NPCs. Once the PCs care about them, they can be used as leverage to either threaten the Pack, force the Pack apart, or even explode an untenable situation.

UNTENABLE SITUATIONS

What are the current untenable situations? Make a note of who is involved, and a couple of ideas on how to push them either with a Soft Move (reminding the players the situation is still live and still difficult) or a Hard Move.

THREATS

What are the threats currently facing the Pack? – and a few ideas on how to push them as with the untenable situations. Note NPCs relevant to each threat.

This looks like a lot of prep – but it need be nothing more than a few scribbled notes to prompt you.



MCING MASTERCLASS

Bite Marks has a cycle to it.

When the Pack are low on Pack Points you should drive wedges, lean on tense relationships, and explode untenable situations. This is this

Making it Hurt! principle. Making it Hurt gives the Pack things to talk about in their Spill and Provoke Spill Moves. When the Pack have plenty of Pack Points (enough to buy a big Pack Move), you want to run them hard with external threats, big fights, and plenty of harm on Hard Moves; because they can take it.

Don't forget to use the **Make space for the Packmates to express themselves** principle and let the game breath. If the story lurches from one disaster to the next, the PCs won't have time to make emotional bonds. They will be too busy reacting to crises after crises. Make sure there are pauses in the action, lulls in the threats – to give the PCs time to bond, connect and care about something other than the next gun in their face.

MAKING IT HURT

The MC should already have a lot of information from character creation, pack creation, relationships, and world building to generate lots of ideas on how to make things hurt. Making it hurt is when you press on tense relationships and untenable situations to drive the Pack apart.

TENSE RELATIONSHIPS

Question the Players about their relationships in the Pack (both PCs and NPC). No Packmate is neutral about another Packmate. What do they like or hate about each other? Draw out and establish strong Packmate relationships. Positive relationships are just as good as negative ones, because positive relationships can be turned into painful leverage later on. Uncover the cracks in the Pack, identify the relationships about to explode, seek out the Packmates carrying pain, grudges, guilt, regret. Find the situations that are untenable. Keep asking questions, picking, and probing until every PC (and some of the NPCs!) have a set of starting emotional undercurrents and strained relationships.

Encouraging the PCs to care about NPCs, whether because they feel positively or negatively towards them. A PC can care about an NPC for many different reasons. For example, because they love them, because they feel a sense of duty towards them, because they fear them, or because they want to get revenge on them. Find lots of different ways to make NPCs matter.

Once the PCs care about the NPCs then use the NPCs as leverage, threaten them, kill them, take them away, make them betray the PCs. Shove the NPCs in the PCs' faces. But remember, the NPCs are there for the PCs be invested in, not the MC. If, as MC, you are breaking your own heart when you kill an NPC, then ensure you are breaking at least one PC's heart too.





As the game progresses, and initial relationship issues are resolved, it is important to ensure new tensions and new untenable situations emerge. The outcomes of Moves, the Traditions, things that happen in the fiction, and the consequences of untenable situations should all provide plenty of ideas for new tense relationships.

Both the MC and the players should be on the look-out for events that have happened in game which could spark new tensions. e.g. has anyone gained a new Tie through a Move? – if so, can you make that the basis of a new and difficult relationship?

Has anyone made a difficult decision? – if so, as MC, ram home the consequences of that decision, and have NPCs take polarising positions on it to drive new tensions.

INCREASING TENSION IN TENSE RELATIONSHIPS

The MC can stage-manage the explosion of a tense relationship using the following techniques:

- 1 Force estranged PCs apart so they can't easily resolve the issue at hand until it has become more intense and out of control.
- 2 Have events that increase the tension in the situation while they are apart, e.g. have NPCs confront those PCs individually about the issue so that they're forced to focus on the emotions involved but can't actually do anything about it.

- 3 Confront the PCs with consequences of past actions.
- 4 Give the PCs a proxy; something or someone that is similar to the situation or issue which reminds them of their problems but allows them to see things from a different angle. E.g. someone suffering feelings of parental abandonment might have to choose whether or not to leave an injured Packmate behind in a dangerous situation. Have an NPC confide in the PC with a problem or issue which reflects the PC's problem right back in their face.
- 5 When the estranged PCs are back together, give them space to confront their issues. Do it when pack pool is low, so they're incentivised to Spill or Provoke Spill.

This sounds highly choreographed – but really you should just seize on opportunities that are presented, and you will definitely have a chance to do one or two of these to heighten the tension.





EXAMPLE

Marta (the Prodigal) always swore she would never create any progeny. She never reconciled with the wolf inside her, hating the instincts and animal drives: it was something that only worsened when she was around the Pack. Inflicting that on someone else was a hard line for her, one she would not cross.

But a day came when she was out hunting and ran across a drunken party of teenagers. She was hungry, and the smell of the hormones, sweat, and heightened emotions was too much for her. Marta lost control and bit a kid called Corey (the Cub). Horrified and shamed, Marta left the Pack and the city, promising never to return.

Corey made their first few changes alone and terrified and, although they are now safe with the Pack, they cannot get over how Marta abandoned them.... just as their father left them behind 10 years earlier.

[All this was established in the starting relationship questions when Marta and Corey's players were setting up their initial Ties.]

Corey has a Tie against Marta because it hurt Corey the most of all the Pack when Marta left and Marta feels really fucking guilty about that.

As MC there are a number of things you can do to manipulate a tense emotional situation like this. Your job is to increase the pressure on the PCs until Marta and Corey are using Spill Moves and emoting all over the place and (if at all possible) destabilising the whole pack with their problem.

Break it down into steps like this:

Allow Marta and Corey to keep their distance from each other when Marta returns to the Pack – the MC could force that distance, for example by having Gar (the NPC Alpha) put them on separate missions until things have really festered.

Have Red (an NPC Packmate) berate Marta for leaving Corey, telling Marta how hard it was for Corey to be abandoned again.

Alternatively, create Red as a sympathetic ear for Corey, encouraging Corey to feel angry and abandoned and to keep their emotions at the surface.

Force Marta to confront the consequences of her abandonment of Corey. For example, if Corey killed someone without her there to guide them through the first few Changes, you could introduce Marta to the grieving family and friends of the victim. Marta might feel guilty in the abstract – but by making things raw, bleeding, and crying, and shoving it in Marta's face, you heighten that guilt

Re-awaken Corey's feelings of abandonment – perhaps the Alpha became a new parent figure? – if so, rip them away from Corey. Perhaps Corey's absent parent tries to get back in touch, echoing the situation in the Pack. Give Corey a proxy situation to ramp up their emotions. Have Red from earlier point out the similarities, to really ram the point home.

When things are close to boiling point, and the Pack are getting low on Pack Pool – throw Corey and Marta into a situation alone together, and then make plenty of time and space for them to shout it out.



UNTENABLE SITUATIONS

One of the biggest jobs of the MC in a *Bite Marks* game is to create or exploit untenable situations. These are those things that cannot go on indefinitely; secrets that will be revealed eventually, conflicts that will explode sooner or later.

TRADITIONS

Many untenable situations will arise during play, but in the early stages of the game the best source of untenable situations are the Traditions. This section is going to concentrate on how to use the Traditions in your initial setup to get a head start on untenable situations.

Traditions are the hard rules of life in the Pack. Once the players have created them, the MC should build up a picture of how to use the Traditions to force the Pack apart. Think of a situation where following the Traditions would be unacceptable, morally wrong, or cause a Packmate to hurt someone they love. That is an untenable situation – then look for a chance to make that situation (or something like it) become a reality.

As above, there are a number of techniques you can take as MC to establish and then explode an untenable situation. Try these out first:

- Ⓒ Identify the NPCs at the centre of an untenable situation. Consider who would be badly hurt when the situation explodes, and make those NPCs important to the PCs. Perhaps make that NPC likeable, competent but not arrogant, warm, a cheerleader for the PCs. Have that NPC show up in various Pack scenes, to establish their personality and show how they are central to the situation that might occur. This will make the untenable situation feel real and give it a relatable face.
- Ⓒ Who in the Pack has lost something important or valuable because a tradition was enforced? If it was a PC, highlight their story, bring them into the current untenable situation, and foreshadow a repeat of their situation. If it is an NPC, bring them into scenes, give them opinions about the situation, make them invested in upholding the Tradition and torn because they don't want to go through it again. People are complicated, and hold contradictory opinions – your NPCs can do the same.
- Ⓒ When the untenable situation has matured to a point where it could naturally explode, then make a note: and when a Hard Move gives you a good opportunity, then collapse the untenable situation so the Pack have to deal with the consequences there and then.



EXAMPLE

In an early playtest game the players created a Pack tradition that no human may know about werewolves, and any human who discovers the secret must be immediately killed. Later in the creation session, the players agreed that their beloved NPC Alpha had an NPC Human wife – “Lady MacPherson”. Clearly a gift for an MC – a simple untenable situation.

This gave the MC an immediate lever to pull to make the game emotionally gut-wrenching and potentially split the Pack. Over the course of the next few sessions the following things happened:

- a) the MC played Lady MacPherson as very present in the lives of the Pack: there were multiple situations where they lied or took actions to protect her and to prevent her discovering their nature.
- b) Lady MacPherson was played as likeable, sympathetic, well-rounded and interesting. She mentored the Cub, she was kind and involved with her husband’s unusual ‘friends’. The MC called her “Lady Mac” hoping that this would stick as an affectionate nickname amongst the players (and PCs). It did stick.
- c) The MC established who in the Pack had previously lost a loved one to this Tradition – someone who was invested in upholding the rule because to do otherwise meant they had colluded in the death of their loved one for nothing. This upped the stakes.

d) The MC made a note that at the most vulnerable and difficult moment a potential Hard Move would have Lady Mac discover the secret about her husband (the Alpha) and the Pack.

e) Some sessions later, when the Alpha was badly hurt and unconscious, the Prodigal made the Heal Move and rolled a miss, creating the fictional opportunity the MC had been waiting for. The MC immediately had Lady Mac come into the room and witness her husband changing into a werewolf. The untenable situation was exploded and the messy aftermath was left in the hands of the PCs.

In the above example, the MC didn't create any 'plot': they simply noted the untenable situation, took the NPC at the center of the situation, and made them beloved and familiar. A PC was given a reason to uphold the Traditions; and at the point when the players were most vulnerable and least able to call on an NPC Alpha to resolve the situation, an opportunity arose for a Hard Move. This might sound like luck – that the perfect fictional situation came about just at the right time. But the beauty of untenable situations is that they can and will collapse at any moment. There will be multiple good chances to make a Hard Move throughout the life of the untenable situation. It is better and more impactful to wait until it will hurt the most. But collapsing an untenable situation will always create good fallout, even if you don't hit the perfect timing.



There are several questions in the setup section to help the Pack craft strong Traditions. Here are some extra questions you could use to get extra details and make it even juicier. Keep the action revolving around a small number of NPCs and relationships to ensure the emotional tension is close and claustrophobic.

'Who violated a tradition and was banished?'

- ⌚ Did this event divide the Pack?
- ⌚ Did other Packmates leave voluntarily when the banishment occurred? Have any of them returned home?
- ⌚ Who wants revenge on the Pack/Alpha for the banishment?
- ⌚ Are the full circumstances known, or have some people got extra, explosive details?
- ⌚ If the full circumstances come out, how will it divide the Pack?
- ⌚ Make the person who was banished from the Pack sympathetic, popular, and compassionate.
- ⌚ Have the banished party show up again: perhaps the Pack desperately need their help, or they are coming back begging to rejoin.
- ⌚ Have the banished party murdered and dumped back on the Pack's doorstep.

'Which PC sacrificed something important to uphold the traditions?'

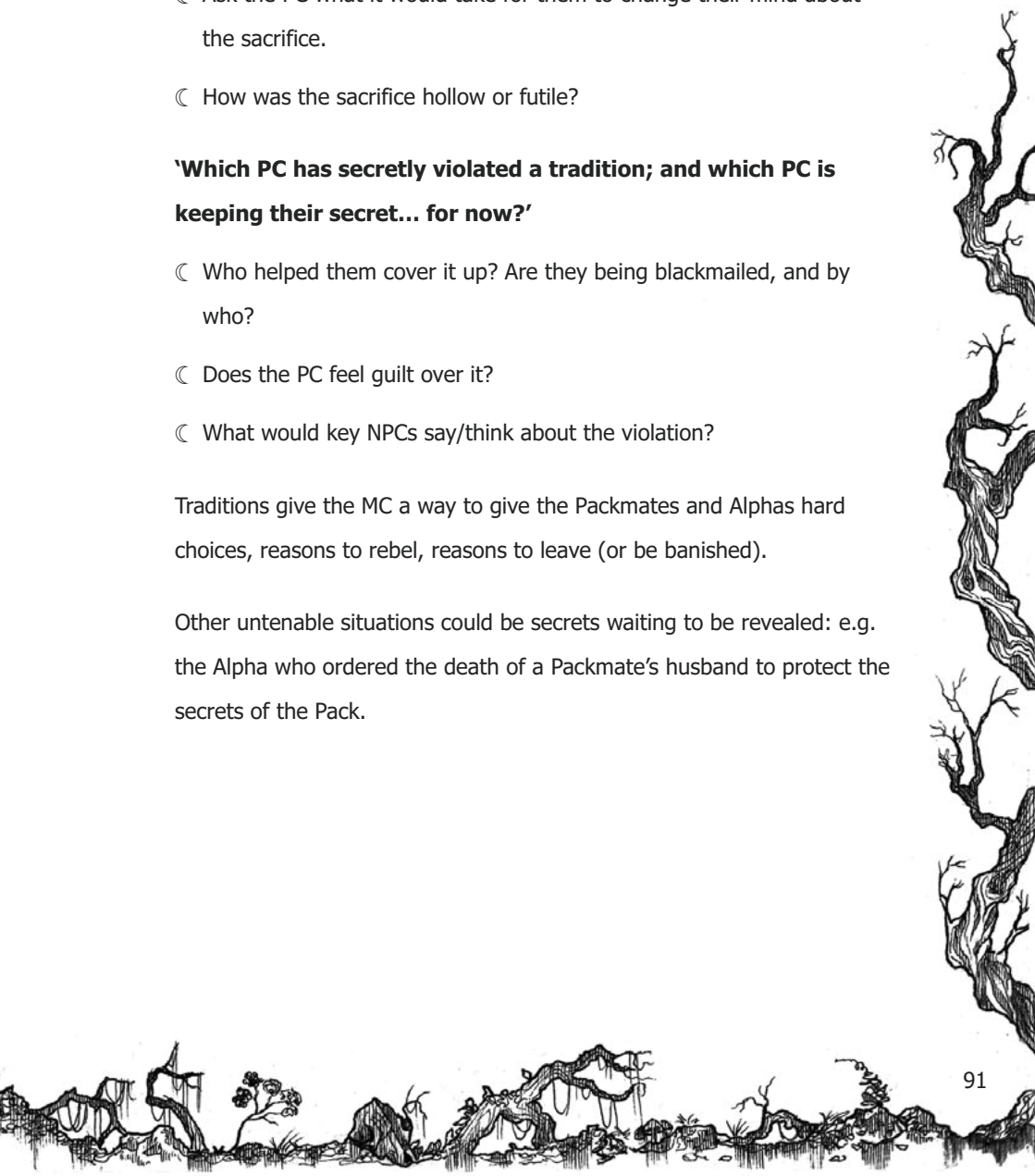
- Ⓒ Ask the PC what it would take for them to change their mind about the sacrifice.
- Ⓒ How was the sacrifice hollow or futile?

'Which PC has secretly violated a tradition; and which PC is keeping their secret... for now?'

- Ⓒ Who helped them cover it up? Are they being blackmailed, and by who?
- Ⓒ Does the PC feel guilt over it?
- Ⓒ What would key NPCs say/think about the violation?

Traditions give the MC a way to give the Packmates and Alphas hard choices, reasons to rebel, reasons to leave (or be banished).

Other untenable situations could be secrets waiting to be revealed: e.g. the Alpha who ordered the death of a Packmate's husband to protect the secrets of the Pack.



NPCS

NPCs are a vital tool in creating, ratcheting and exploding untenable situations.



I said earlier that it is important to create NPCs that the PCs feel emotionally invested in. Make these NPCs feel real and compelling to the players – increasing the emotional leverage of the NPCs until the opportunity to force an untenable situation presents itself. If you have an NPC important to only one player character, then your job is to create relationships between that NPC and other PCs in the game – have the NPC approach those players for help, advice, to offer a romantic affair, or to trample on the plans of another PC. Make them matter: and if they don't matter to enough people, find a way to make them matter to more people. Mattering can be positive or negative!

Second – portray NPCs in a rich and engaging way. The NPCs are not mere plot or information-delivery devices. They are far more important. As mentioned above, they are the MC's main tools for creating and forcing untenable situations to explode. They are the key levers for prising apart the Pack and creating emotional tension. Use them to reflect the PCs' own fears and tense relationships. But none of this will happen unless the PCs invest in the NPCs and act like they are important. Work out what an NPC thinks and believes: knowing their motivations will enable the MC to show them reacting honestly to the actions of the PCs – nothing is more compelling than honesty. **This is some of the most important prep an MC will do for the game.**



EXAMPLE

Lady MacPherson is the Alpha's Human wife. Despite being ignorant of the werewolves, she is central to the Pack. The Pack often congregate at her home. She just assumes her husband has many close friends, and so she makes them feel welcome and keeps an open house for them – whilst expecting them to pitch in with the washing up or other jobs when things need doing. She is played as fair, steady, warm-hearted, and capable. She is practical and solutions-oriented, but with a strong sense of duty to look after those around her. NPC Pack members sometimes treat her as a de facto Alpha – even though she is human and nowhere near as physically strong as the wolves, it is a mark of respect.

The MC should look for opportunities to show her as caring but pragmatic. She employs the youngest Pack member as a sort of odd-job person – giving him useful work on the Manor until he finds his feet again after failing university.

In a crisis she will be level-headed and will look to protect those around her, with violence if necessary. She would make a formidable werewolf if anyone ever Changed her.

This rough description tells an MC how to describe her to the Players, what sort of things she will say, and what reactions she may have in an untenable situation.



MOVES TO WATCH OUT FOR

In *Bite Marks* it is very clear when someone wants to do violence (Mauling), but what about other Moves? Is someone just being emphatic in their role-playing, or are they triggering a Dominate Move?

The three things you need to keep an eye out for are Dominate, Spill/Provoke Spill, and Give in to the Wolf Moves.

In relation to the first two, you need to be aware of when someone is trying to influence a social dynamic using these Moves, and then check in with the players asking them if a Move is being triggered. Timing is everything, though – don't interrupt an intensely emotional conversation by asking if someone is Spilling. Wait for a pause, to avoid breaking the tension: it doesn't matter if you do the book-keeping for Spill at the end of the conversation. Provoke Spill is a little more tricky, but this Move is really about seeing if you can force someone to Spill when they don't want to. There won't be an intense conversation to disrupt, because the other player will be blocking it anyway.

The last one is easy and fun. Any time a PC declares they are changing into a wolf, ask them if they are merely changing forms or using the Give in to the Wolf Move. Often players who were simply changing their appearance (not using the Move) will, if given a prompt, choose to use the Move because it is more fun or fictionally appropriate... this of course creates the chance of a Hard Move if they miss their roll!

EXAMPLE: DOMINATE

If Kane growls at the assembled Pack to 'Stand down.' then the MC might say 'sounds like you are making the Dominate Move, is that right?'

EXAMPLE: SPILL

Yelp and Accalia are lying in a ditch, waiting for the Alpha's signal to attack. This is Yelp's first battle and they stink of fear. Accalia puts a reassuring hand on their back and Yelp sighs before saying 'Is it always like this? Will I always be this afraid?' MC should wait to the end of the scene before reconciling the Spill Move.

EXAMPLE: PROVOKE SPILL

Ghost is racked with guilt and tosses and turns all night. Exhausted and worried, Katya sits up, puts the light on, and says 'Right. What is wrong with you? Something is clearly on your mind.' Ghost replies 'It's nothing, go back to sleep, honey.' Katya says 'Bullshit, you've been distant and closed off ever since you got back from Scotland. What happened?' Ghost says nothing but turns over and pretends to go back to sleep.

Katya is asking Ghost about something vulnerable and Ghost is blocking them. Katya is Provoking Spill and since Ghost has attempted to end the conversation the MC will not be breaking tension to say 'Katya – that is definitely trying to Provoke Spill there. Roll it.'



GROUP BONDING

- Ⓒ Refer to your players as your Pack.
- Ⓒ Encourage the players to create nicknames for each others' PCs, and to make and share in-jokes.
- Ⓒ Get the players to choose a "theme" song – perhaps one they all already know and love – or make a group playlist.
- Ⓒ Share a meal, and have everyone wait to eat before the Alpha player starts: or have the Alpha serve everyone their food out of communal pots.
- Ⓒ Start each session by sharing a drink – make a ritual out of it, and make it special.
- Ⓒ Wearing matching colours, or jewellery: something small and discreet that you can all obtain easily.
- Ⓒ Get everyone to repeat a mantra/affirmation before the session starts. For example, "Pack is Mother, Pack is Father. Pack is Fed, Pack is Home. Pack is Safe. Pack is Life."
- Ⓒ A handshake, hug, or physical greeting when you meet.
- Ⓒ Share a domestic chore before a session – e.g. cooking a meal together.
- Ⓒ Do something physical together: a run, a sport, or sparring session.
- Ⓒ Howl together at the start of the session. Do it full-heartedly past the point it feels silly. Then when a Packmate does something cool in the game, howl again!
- Ⓒ All get matching wolf-themed tattoos (ok, maybe that is going a bit too far. But I bet it would give you a bonding experience! And you could always use marker pens for something less permanent.)

CONVENTIONS AND ONE-SHOTS

Bite Marks is a game that works best over several sessions to really explore all the story threads and relationships you create. Conventions usually allow for a single gaming session of 3–5 hours, alternatively known as a one-shot. *Bite Marks* needs a tiny bit of tweaking and adaptation to make it successful in this shorter time slot. These are the ideas and principles for making that transition.

In the world generation section, you create a lot of material – too much material for a one-shot. So you need to pare down the information, threats, and NPCs you create to a smaller number of potential storylines; and make everything a little more focused and a little less sprawling.

Here are the steps to doing that:

CREATE A CENTRAL PROVOCATIVE QUESTION

This is the most important bit – most things feed off this starting point!

Create a central provocative question that will be answered by the end of the session, and make sure (by asking questions and using NPCs as levers) that every PC cares about the answer to the questions. The best questions involve some sort of power dynamic or political issue to be resolved.





EXAMPLES OF CENTRAL PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS

- Ⓒ The Alpha is missing. Who will lead the Pack in their absence?
- Ⓒ Who is the Pack traitor who killed Alessandro the Cub, and what will we do with them?
- Ⓒ What will it take for Tabi (beloved Packmate) to get Exiled from the Pack?

Set this question up in advance – make it part of the game description which is written and circulated. Then everyone will know what they are aiming at when they sign up for the game.

This central question or premise will give the players plenty of ways to bounce off each other, but will keep the action tight and easily resolved in a few hours. It gives a focus to weave into tense relationships and untenable situations; and it will also create a natural climax/endpoint to make the game ending feel satisfying.

The central question should be something that an MC can use to force tension into the Pack.

PRE-GENERATE SOME OF THE GENERAL BACKGROUND

For example, the details of the locality where the Pack lives. You can also pre-generate some elements of the Pack creation process: e.g. you might want to specify a particular Tradition that feeds back into the central question.

Concentrate questions to the players on the central question, the threats facing the Pack, and their messed-up relationships. Look for ways to link some of these things together.

THREATS.

You should have a couple of threats as part of the general background. This allows you some flexibility to put the players under pressure as you need to. The threats should be relevant (even indirectly to the central question) e.g. if the central questions concerns a power vacuum, then having the pack as leaderless while facing a deadly threat will make the central question more pressing. Over the session, one of the threats will emerge as the most important, and may create a natural climactic fight scene or similar.

Adjust these threats according to the players' answers to the earlier questions, as necessary. There will be fundamental aspects to the threats you can decide ahead of time and then tweak the details later. Players will expect a one-shot or convention game to be a little more directed by the MC in order to get a satisfying story in the time-limit.





CRISIS POINTS ARE YOUR FRIENDS

Avoid 'slow-burn' relationship issues and questions. Use questions that force as much as possible to a nearly-crisis point as fast as you can.

Slow-burn relationship problems won't come out in a short game. It is fine if not all relationship angst is resolved – but if there are too many long-term issues, it will dull the tension of the game.

LIMIT THE SKIN OPTIONS THE PLAYERS CAN CHOOSE FROM

You can even pre-choose some of the stats and Skin Moves – this allows the MC to think about the likely tensions between PCs before the session starts.

PLAY NPCs HARD AND FAST.

There is no time to build things up slowly – NPCs should be taking decisive action, taking sides, swearing loyalty, challenging the Alpha, declaring their love, starting fights, running off with a hotheaded plan or two, etc.

Convention play tends to work best if things are a little larger than life, if people make rash decisions and throw themselves at a situation; encourage the players to do this, and play NPCs the same way.

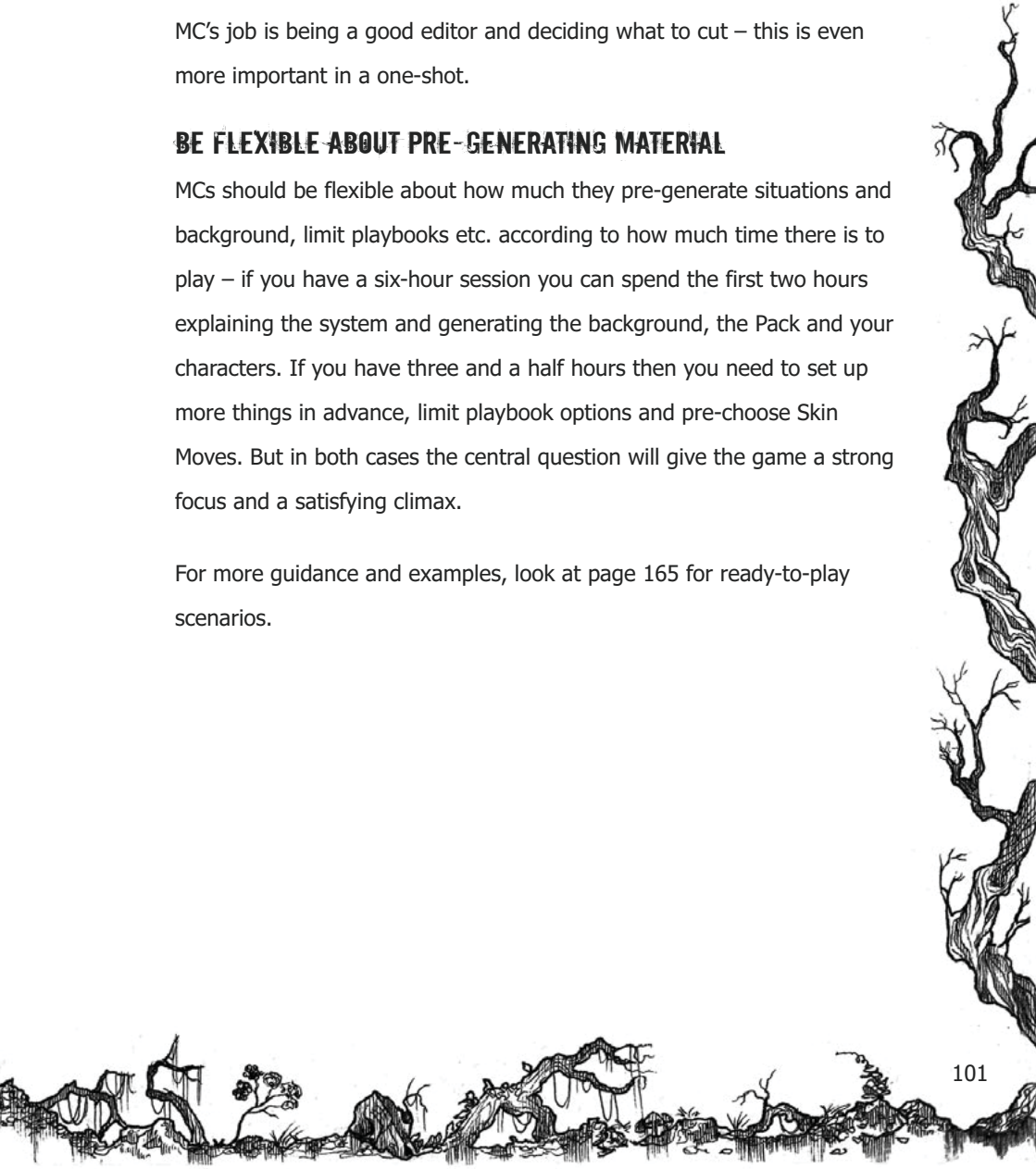
DON'T BE AFRAID TO DITCH MATERIAL YOU DON'T HAVE TIME FOR

Everything should feed into the central provocative question. But you won't have time to use everything that the Players create. Part of the MC's job is being a good editor and deciding what to cut – this is even more important in a one-shot.

BE FLEXIBLE ABOUT PRE-GENERATING MATERIAL

MCs should be flexible about how much they pre-generate situations and background, limit playbooks etc. according to how much time there is to play – if you have a six-hour session you can spend the first two hours explaining the system and generating the background, the Pack and your characters. If you have three and a half hours then you need to set up more things in advance, limit playbook options and pre-choose Skin Moves. But in both cases the central question will give the game a strong focus and a satisfying climax.

For more guidance and examples, look at page 165 for ready-to-play scenarios.





WEREWOLF

LORE

WEREWOLF LORE

I am not proposing one particular werewolf mythology as 'true' in this game. Rather, I want you to use your own ideas about werewolves, perhaps inspired by existing werewolf books, movies and TV shows. Any of the tropes about werewolves can be used in interesting ways to drive the Pack apart, show their werewolf natures, and otherwise make your MC principles come to life. Here are a few starting points:

HUNTERS – A group of humans who know who the werewolves are and are dedicated to hunting them into extinction is a fantastic challenge and opponent for the players. Characterise them with greater numbers, the ability to expose the werewolf secret, and/or superior firepower in order to really threaten the Pack. Having the Pack betrayed to the Hunters by someone close to them or by a Pack member will really make this trope bite.

ELDER WOLVES – Something you can use to great effect is what happens to the elder werewolves. The idea that werewolves have elongated lifespans is common. This sets them apart from younger generations. Ancient wolves will likely have different priorities and be shaped by different events which the younger generation cannot understand.

What if werewolves lose humanity as they age? Either becoming unbearably heartless and cold, or else eventually turning into a normal wolf and forgetting how to turn back – or how to even think like a human ever again. Drawing this process out can create a deep sense of pathos and can be deeply affecting for the PCs.

SILVER / WOLFSBANE / MOUNTAIN ASH / SPECIAL WEAPONS – Are the werewolves unusually vulnerable to something? Does it deal extra damage, or force them to change form? It might be silver, it might be something else: but either way, introducing a substance that makes the Pack weak gives them a powerful enemy to unite against.

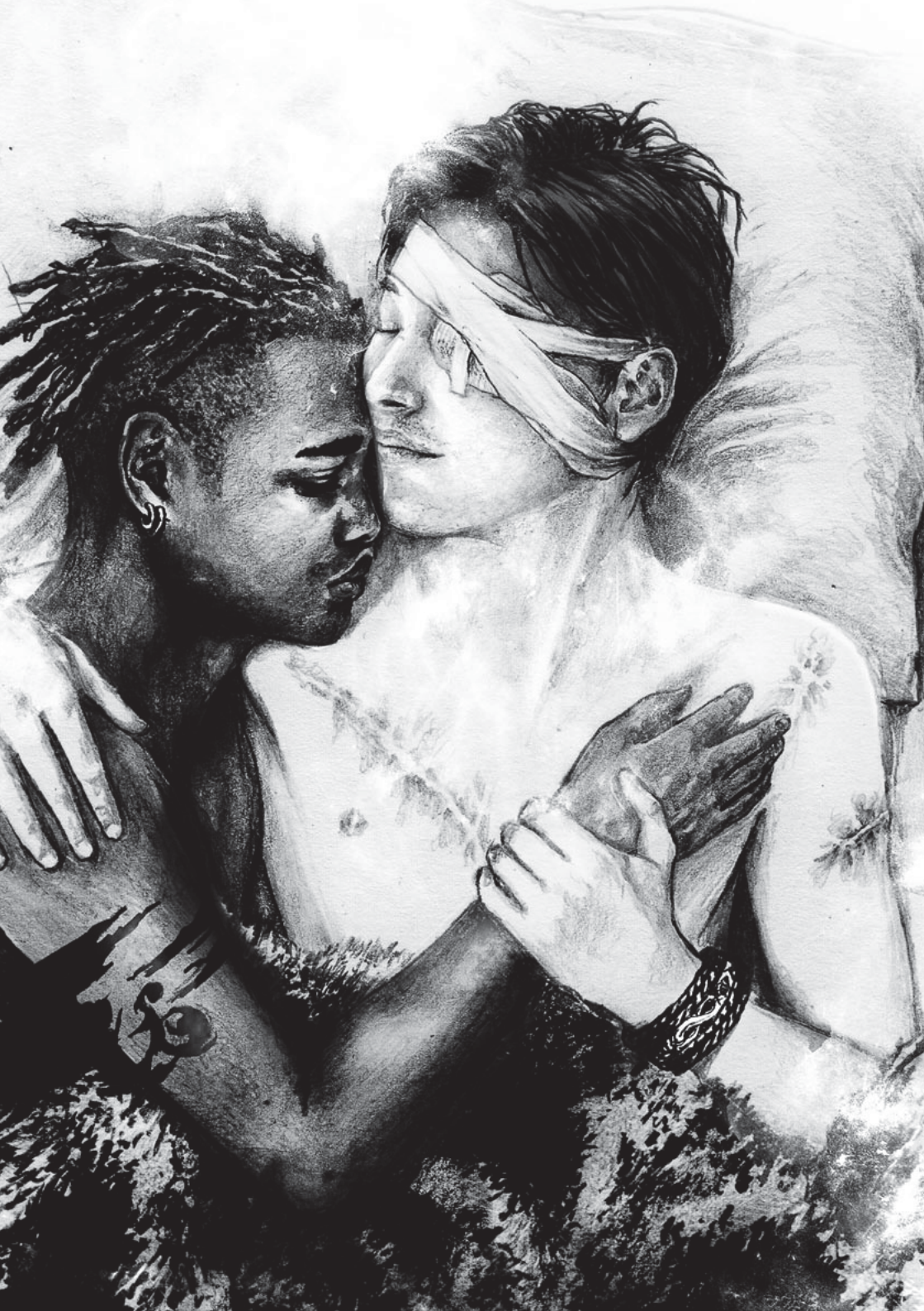
WEREWOLVES ARE BORN AND WEREWOLVES ARE BITTEN – An excellent source of ideas and tension comes from the creation stories of werewolves. Hereditary werewolves born and raised in the Pack may have a very different outlook, demeanor, and priorities to those who lived completely human lives until they were bitten. The ability to bite and create progeny may also be an important source of control. Maybe only the Alpha gets to create progeny by biting, or maybe it is a right that the Alpha passes out to their favourites in the Pack. Use the two types of werewolves to drive deep wedges in the Pack. Blood ties and the desire for children run deep, and both can be currency here.

GENETICS / MILITARY TECH CORPORATIONS – A company who knows about werewolves and will stop at nothing to get their hands on one, take them apart, and use the knowledge to make a fortune.

THE FULL MOON – does this have a special pull on the wolves, or make them more or less likely to lose control? Perhaps the Pack has special rituals around the lunar cycle.

Any of these could be fertile ground for Custom Moves see page 53.





BASIC MOVES

BASIC MOVES

DOMINATE [TEETH]

When you order someone (or several people) to do something they object to doing, roll to Dominate. You can make this move against NPCs and PCs alike, but against not the Pack Alpha or anyone with a Move who prevents them being dominated. [NB: If you seek (consciously or unconsciously, permanently or temporarily) to take control of the Pack and you do not have the Alpha playbook then you make the move "Make a Challenge" instead.] For more information on how Dominate and Disobey work together please see page 112.

10+ You take full control of the situation. NPCs will do as they are told even if it becomes dangerous or they have been away from you for a long period of time. PCs cannot Disobey your current order, but forcing them to do it comes at a cost. They will take a +1 Tie on you; because some decisions come back to Bite.

7–9 The situation is mostly under your control. NPCs will do as you ask but half-heartedly and may abandon an order if it becomes dangerous / they have been away from you for too long. Packmates get a –1 Forward to Disobey your current order, if they wish to attempt it. Packmates who don't attempt to Disobey can fill in a circle on the Wolf/Human track as appropriate.

0-6 Things are sliding further out of your control. If what you sought control over was a Packmate, then they describe the consequences and additionally the Packmate gets a +1 Tie on you. If it was not a Packmate then the MC makes a hard move.

EXAMPLE

The Pack is being tracked by Hunters and the Alpha, Dimmy, knows that Nicky (the Fixer)'s girlfriend is one of them. Dimmy wants Nicky to use that connection to lure the Hunters into a fatal trap. They argue about it and Dimmy uses Dominate to force Nicky to do it. Dimmy rolls an 11 on their Dominate Move and Nicky obeys, but Nicky is simmering with rage and starts to plot revenge.

EXAMPLE

Horizon, the Cub, is gripped with terror. The hunters have the Pack cornered and this is their last stand. The other wolves are the veterans of many battles, but Horizon has never had to fight for their life before and they are freezing up. Harlow grabs them by the shoulders and looks into their eyes, saying "You will get out there and you will fight for the Pack."

Harlow is trying to Dominate Horizon into overcoming their fear and fighting alongside the rest of them. Harlow rolls a 5 on their Dominate Move. Since Horizon is an NPC, the MC decides that the Cub is charged up by Harlow's domination and instead of waiting for the rest of the Pack they run out of cover; full tilt at the enemy. "Horizon runs out of cover into a direct line of machinegun fire... what do you do, Harlow?"





Obviously this Move can allow one character to mentally dominate another character into taking an action their player does not want to take. As a player, you might feel uncomfortable (or annoyed!) about being forced to take an action. Feeling that feeling is a part of *Bite Marks* Your character has to take the action, but you don't have to like it, and your character doesn't have to like it either.

Dominate is there to create more story by:

- ⌋ Having your character feel and express resentment,
- ⌋ Having the event change the way your character feels about the person who dominated you,
- ⌋ Feeling guilt about something awful your character did and perhaps that they weren't strong enough to resist.

But – your character **MUST** do the thing they are successfully dominated into doing. This will be because either another PC has made a successful Dominate Move or you have rolled a 0–6 on a Disobey move.

However... this is not a game about screwing each other over out-of-character.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

We already have a Banned List of things which we won't have in the game. That list applies doubly so to the Dominate move. Do not Dominate anyone (PC or NPC) into doing something related to the banned list – if someone does this, then anyone can and should step in and remind the group about the safety rules.

Bite Marks has two additional safety rules for Dominate:

- ☾ UI doesn't work in relation to demanding sexual acts
- ☾ It doesn't work in relation to forcing someone to commit suicide

For matters of suicide and sexual consent Dominate will not work.

DISOBEY [GUTS]

When you try to resist the following: Alpha's orders, an attempt to Dominate you, or the Traditions of the Pack. Roll +Guts.

10+ You Disobey, and it empowers you. Take +1 forward.

7–9 You Disobey, but it troubles you greatly. Take –1 from the Pack Pool.

0–6 You want to Disobey, but your instinct to obey overwhelms you. You acquiesce, and the MC chooses a Packmate who will take a +1 Tie on you.

DOMINATE V. DISOBEY

These two Moves have a slightly more complicated interaction. There is scope for an endless Dominate/Disobey loop which would be no fun. This section makes it clear when a Dominate Move is being made, when a Disobey Move can be made and which comes first.

Roll to Disobey when:

- Ⓒ An Alpha has ordered a PC to do something and the PC wants to ignore that order.
- Ⓒ A PC wants to ignore a Tradition.
- Ⓒ Someone has tried to Dominate a PC into doing something and rolled 7–9 on that Dominate Move.

Roll to Dominate when:

- Ⓒ You want to force someone (or several someones) to do something they don't want to do.

You should only make one Dominate or Disobey roll targeting the same character or Tradition in a given situation. A missed Disobey roll means you must now follow orders, like it or not. A missed Dominate roll means they don't have to obey you. You only get to roll again if the situation has moved on – usually in a new scene or significant change in the current scene e.g. if the scene is interrupted by an attack from a rival pack.

EXAMPLE

Aimee has been discovered by a group of humans, mid-change into wolf form. The Traditions of the pack say she must now kill them all. But one of those humans is Aimee's friend Max, whom she has been considering giving The Bite to.

Aimee desperately does not want to kill Max! She rolls to Disobey the Tradition and succeeds. Aimee doesn't have to kill Max. She does not have to roll again for this Tradition, so can also choose not to kill the other humans in the current group.

The differences between an Alpha giving an Order (which is a fictional position) and an Alpha Dominating a PC (which is a mechanical effect) are:

- Ⓒ NPC Alphas cannot make Dominate Moves (but can give Orders).
- Ⓒ A PC may accept an Alpha's Order when it is given and later they may wish to Disobey. If a PC has been Dominated they must decide immediately whether to try and Disobey, and can't change their mind later on.
- Ⓒ Alphas can give standing Orders that apply even when they are not present in the scene. Dominate only happens in live situations when one character is telling the other directly (either face to face, by text conversation, by phone etc.) that they will not do what they are being asked, and the other seeks to Dominate them into doing so.



If a PC Alpha is giving Orders and another PC refuses that Order directly to the Alpha (whether in person, over the phone, by text) then when resolving the order of Moves, Dominate always goes first. If a PC Alpha tries to Dominate first and rolls a 7–9 then the other PC may opt to make a Disobey Move. If the PC Alpha rolled a 10+ then the other character doesn't get to Disobey; if they rolled a 0–6 then they don't succeed. If the other PC opts to Disobey the order before the PC Alpha has asked to make a Dominate Move then resolve the outcome of the Disobey Move only: a Dominate Move cannot be made. If they ignore the Order without discussing it with the Alpha then it is a Disobey Move, and Dominate is not relevant as the Alpha is not able to exert control over the situation.

MAKE A CHALLENGE [GUTS]

When you attempt to Dominate the Alpha, Dominate a Packmate into disobeying a direct order of the Alpha's, or take control of the Pack (temporarily or permanently) then use this move.

Alphas may not make this move.

10+ You are now the Pack Leader. Take the Alpha Skin and discard your previous Skin, keep your original Stats and your Moves. Take one Move from the Alpha list.

If the losing Alpha is a player then they can choose to retain their character and have them take a new Skin, or retire the character and choose a new character with a new Skin. If the losing Alpha keeps their

character they may keep their Stats but discard all their Alpha moves and choose the same number of new Moves from the new Skin. If they choose a completely new character then they may choose new Stats and the same number of new Moves they had previously accumulated on the Alpha Skin. They must also answer the new Packmate question on the sheet.

7–9 You succeed, but only just: you are in control of the Pack for now but it could change at any moment. Don't take the Alpha Skin yet – you'll need to make another Make a Challenge Move at a 10+ to gain permanent control. Take –1 to the Pack Pool.

0–6 You fail and take a permanent scar (mental or physical) and –1 to one stat, your choice.





EXAMPLE

The Alpha is dead and the Pack is leaderless and falling to pieces. Halo doesn't want the leadership but they are the only one who could bring the Pack together. So Halo makes a stirring speech about how the Pack is a family, how they have all sworn to defend each other and are bound in blood and flesh. Halo lays out a plan to kill the hunters and bring peace back to the Pack. After this the MC would probably say "Hmmm, sounds like you are making a challenge for the leadership, Halo?" Halo agrees and rolls to Make A Challenge.

Alternatively, Old Ma Reeney may be an unpopular Alpha. Upon ordering her Enforcer to kill the Cub for breaking a Tradition, the Enforcer may not only refuse that order but make it clear that they will challenge Old Ma for leadership of the Pack as well. In this case the Enforcer would also roll to Make A Challenge.

MAULING [TEETH]

When you use physical violence in a situation. This includes attacking, defending, causing damage or injury temporary or permanent, killing, knocking an opponent unconscious, etc.

10+ choose two, **7–9** choose one:

- Ⓒ you take –1 Harm
- Ⓒ you deal +1 Harm
- Ⓒ you discern your opponent's next move
- Ⓒ you knock someone out
- Ⓒ you impress or intimidate someone
- Ⓒ Do not take –1 Forward on your next 'Give In To The Wolf' Move

0–6 MC makes a hard move and a PC takes a +1Tie on you

See page 54 for the Harm rules.



GIVE IN TO THE WOLF [FERAL]

When you give yourself to the wolf, roll +Feral.

10+ choose two, **7–9** choose one:

- Ⓒ Reduce Heart and Guts by +2 total and increase Teeth and Feral by +2 total (split these modifiers however you wish but no stat can go above +3 in total)
- Ⓒ +1 Harm from your bite and claws
- Ⓒ +2 Armour
- Ⓒ +2 to the Pack Pool
- Ⓒ Heal +1 additional Harm when you return from Wolf Form

0–6 MC Takes over your character for the next scene. You are no longer in control of yourself – the wolf takes over.

Regardless of the result, when you return from Wolf Form, as usual, you heal 3 Harm.

When in Wolf Form your ability to communicate is limited to what can be reasonably be conveyed using the mouth and body of a wolf.

When characters Give in to the Wolf, they are deliberately running the risk of their human intelligence losing control of their body for the scene.

If the risk pays off they will get lots of mechanical benefits and become even more powerful.

You can take the form of a wolf at any time without affecting your stats or your health. If you want to get mechanical benefits from changing to Wolf Form (in addition to the healing benefit when changing forms on page 58) then you must either Harness the Wolf (see below) or Give in to the Wolf.

EXAMPLE

The Pack are in a dangerous situation and facing defeat. If Nicky uses Give in to the Wolf then she will run the risk of rolling a miss, and having the MC take control over her character. But if she gets a 7–9 then she can add 2 points to the Pack Pool, which is just enough for them to use one of the special Pack Moves which will get them out of trouble.

Nicky describes relinquishing the control she has over her inner wolf and rolls the dice. She rolls an 11 and chooses to add +2 to the Pack Pool and heal an additional +1 Harm.



HARNESS THE WOLF [HEART]

When you use your wolf senses and instincts (in either Human or Wolf Form) e.g. heightened sense of smell, hearing, hunting, etc. to find something, someone or find out information. Roll +Feral. On a hit you ask the MC questions at any time during this scene. Get +1 Forward per question if you immediately act on the answer. On a **10+**, ask three questions; on a **7-9** ask one.

- ⌋ Who is the weakest here?
- ⌋ Where is the trail / where is my prey?
- ⌋ What is the strongest emotion in this location?
- ⌋ What do they really want?
- ⌋ What is the biggest threat to the Pack?
- ⌋ What smells wrong here?
- ⌋ Who/what is dominant in this situation?
- ⌋ Where is the escape route / route through?
- ⌋ Where does the Pack need to be?

0-6 MC makes a Hard Move.

EXAMPLE

Harlow and Colt have been sent deep into the Forest to try and pick up the trail of a rogue werewolf which has been laying scent all over Pack territory. It is late on a moonless night, the trees are crooked and forbidding, and the scent trail makes no sense. It is confusing, full of twists and switchbacks.

Colt's player says "Wait up! Something isn't right here. I'm going to stop and get a sense of what is really going on here."

MC: "Are you Harnessing the Wolf?"

Colt: "Definitely. I close my eyes and concentrate on the scent trails."

Colt's player rolls 2d6 and adds Feral, getting a 7. They ask the MC "What smells wrong here?"

MC: "Now you are really thinking about it, two things occur to you. This trail is leading you towards a rocky cleft about 200 yards ahead. It is a perfect ambush site. But you realise that the reason the scent feels so strange is that it is the scent of two wolves, blended very skillfully."

Colt: "Right, sounds like there is going to be a fight. With Harlow injured I'm going to need every advantage I can get. I'll make the Move, Give In to the Wolf."

MC: "Ok – don't forget to add +1 for immediately acting on the answer to your question."



ACT ON INSTINCT [FERAL]

When you use your superhuman abilities or act under a threat.

10+ you do it: describe how you succeed, give it a little flourish, and take +1 Pack Pool

7–9 you do it, but the MC describes how the situation is not under your control

0–6 MC makes a hard Move

SPILL

Werewolves' feelings and emotions are much closer to the surface than humans, and the close nature of the Pack means that you express them more readily.

When you openly and truthfully express one of the following:

- ☾ your desire for a Packmate
- ☾ why you are hurting
- ☾ what you are angry about
- ☾ what you are afraid of

add +1 Pack Pool, and give your Packmate +1 Tie on you – as they've seen you raw and vulnerable.

This move can be used on NPC Packmates – in which case do not give them a Tie.

EXAMPLE

Harlow: "Ok, now that Colt has just saved my life I need to talk to them. I'll grab them someplace private and say 'I need to tell you something, Colt. You aren't going to like it, but I've got to get this clear between us.'"

Colt: "What is it, is something wrong?"

Harlow: Taking a deep breath "Your parents didn't die in an attack from the Northern Pack."

Colt: "What the fuck are you talking about?"

Harlow: "The Alpha had me kill them. They were going to leave the Pack and take you with them and... I'm sorry. There hasn't been a day that I haven't felt guilty. I'm so sorry."

Colt: "Get away from me. I can't even look at you right now."

MC: "Wow – that was intense. Colt, take a +1 Tie on Harlow and add +1 to the Pack Pool!"



PROVOKE SPILL [HEART]

When you do something to provoke a Packmate to reveal how they really feel, roll +Heart.

10+ they have to make the Spill Move

7–9 they Spill and you choose one:

- ☾ their response provokes you to Spill as if they'd rolled a 10+; or
- ☾ they can opt to omit an aspect of the truth in their Spill response but you don't get the Pack Pool element of the Spill Move.

0–6 MC makes a hard move.

EXAMPLE

Colt: "I go wolf-running, alone in the forest, even though there is a danger of Hunters."

MC: "Are you sneaking off or might someone see you?"

Colt: "I'm not thinking about hiding, I'm just going."

MC: "Ok Tails, you are patrolling the immediate territory looking for Hunters, when Colt darts across the treeline in wolf form – their silver blonde fur is immediately recognisable."

Tails: "Shit. I'd better go after them. Things are getting bad in the woods. I'll change form and head them off by the copse."

MC: "The two of you catch up to each other in the copse: the trees are close and every shadow looks like a hunter. But the air is clean and it seems like you are safe for now."

Tails: "I turn back so I can talk. 'Colt, what are you doing? It isn't safe out here. You'll put us all in danger. What the hell is wrong with you?'"

Colt: "I'll stay in Wolf Form, probably whine a little bit but otherwise ignore the question."

Tails: "'I'm serious, tell me what is going on right now or I'll grab you by the scruff and take you home in my teeth.' I'm Provoking Spill but I've only rolled a 7."

MC: "Ok Colt, are you going to leave out something important to provoke Tails to Spill in return".

Colt: "Hmmm...Tails is in a relationship with Harlow so I think I'll save that bit of the story for later to increase the tension. I'll change to human form. Tails you'll see that I've got a slightly greyish tinge to my skin and my scent is full of fear and confusion. 'My parents, they weren't killed by the Northern Pack. It was our Alpha – they ordered their deaths. I can't believe it. I thought this was my family after I was left alone, but it isn't. It is a prison. I don't know what to do.'"





SKINS

THE ALPHA

The Pack is nothing without the Alpha and the Alpha is nothing without the Pack. You are their centre, their heart and they give you status and purpose. How do you dominate your Pack? Do you rule with fear, viciously punishing the disobedient? Or are you respected and loved by all. Maybe it is just complicated. Are the Pack waiting to depose you, or to run into danger and die for you? There are many ways to be Alpha and the Pack always reflects your inner self.

NAME Jeremy, Ade, Evelyn, Mal, Amoz, Cierra, Daitan, Ursula, Grimnir, Reenie, Qama, Red, Romulus, Bran, Accalia, Kate, Yafeu, [Insert your own choice]

PRONOUN he, she, they

LOOK

[Choose all that apply]:

- ☐ Androgynous, Genderqueer, Femme, Masc
- ☐ Dark eyes, Angry eyes, Deep eyes, Red eyes, Light eyes
- ☐ Lithe, Heavy, Tall, Short, Broad, Wiry, Curvy, Muscular
- ☐ Dark skin, Pale skin, Brown skin, Scarred skin, Rough skin, Tattooed skin
- ☐ Long hair, Short hair, Curly hair, Straight hair, Thin hair, Thick hair, Locs, Braids, Shaved, Bald
- ☐ [insert your own choice]

HEARTBEAT

[Choose three]: Contained, Controlled, Violent, Domineering, Calculating, Necessary, Hard, Lonely, Yearning, Steady, Protective, Strong

STATS

[Choose one stat and add +1]:

TEETH +1

HEART +2

GUTS 0

FERAL -1

WOLF PATH ○○○

HUMAN PATH ○○○

[When you fill up both tracks, choose another advance or +1 to a stat of your choice up to a max +3]

HARM PHASES



PACKMATES

Who did you banish from the Pack and what reason did you give? Which Packmate resents you for it? They take a +1 Tie on you.

When you complete a scene resolving this tension, take +1 Pack Pool and write a new question.

WHO YOU GOT TIES ON?

ALPHA SPECIAL MOVES

[Choose two starting moves and State of the Pack]

STATE OF THE PACK

[start of session move] at the start of every session roll Heart.

10+ Every Packmate gets -1 to Disobey you for this session.

7-9 Choose one Packmate who gets +1 to Disobey you and one Packmate who gets -1 to Disobey you for this session.

0-6 MC may have a Packmate break a tradition or disobey your orders.

WE ARE PACK

Once per session when you make a stirring speech before a common endeavor, tell the Pack the Pack's shared purpose and your plan. If no-one disagrees with the plan, and everyone obeys it until its conclusion, add +3 to the Pack Pool. If someone acts against the plan, then -2 Pack Pool.

WHO'S A GOOD WOLF?

When you ask a Packmate to make a Move, by praising them or emotionally boosting them, give them +1 on that Move.

E.g "Hey, Yelp, you're the best of us at hunting. Find me the goddamn trail!"

Yelp makes the Harness the Wolf move, and they get +1 to their roll.

HEARTS AND MINDS [HEART]

When you ask someone to do something by playing on their emotions you can make the Dominate Move using Heart instead of Teeth.

TIME FOR A NEW TRADITION

Pack traditions have evolved and changed over time. When you gather a conclave of the Pack you can get rid of a Tradition and/or institute a new one.

SEX MOVE

If you and another Player Character have sex, then they gain the Alpha Move 'Hearts and Minds' but can only use it on you. They are under your skin now... what you do about that is up to you.



THE CUB

You are the newest member of the pack, a freshly bitten werewolf with only a few Changes to your name. You are learning the rules and making relationships with your new Packmates, but you are fucking up a lot.

They love you anyway. You're the younger sibling, indulged and frustrating. Are you desperate to prove yourself, enjoying being the baby of the family, or both?

NAME Yelp, Horizon, Chen, Cyrus, Daisy, Fluff, Ruff, Levi, Colt, Rosie, Max, Desi, Nat, Diggs, Dulce, Emiko, Talib, Zalika

PRONOUN he, she, they

LOOK

[Choose all that apply]:

- ☐ Androgynous, Genderqueer, Femme, Masc
- ☐ Dark eyes, Angry eyes, Deep eyes, Red eyes, Light eyes
- ☐ Lithe, Heavy, Tall, Short, Broad, Wiry, Curvy, Muscular
- ☐ Dark skin, Pale skin, Brown skin, Scarred skin, Rough skin, Tattooed skin
- ☐ Long hair, Short hair, Curly hair, Straight hair, Thin hair, Thick hair, Locs, Braids, Shaved, Bald
- ☐ [insert your own choice]

HEARTBEAT

[Choose three]: Energetic, Naive, Playful, Teasing, Frustrated, Young, Innocent, Angry, Insecure, Trusting, Struggling, Relentless

STATS

[Choose one stat and add +1]

TEETH 0

HEART +2

GUTS 0

FERAL 0

WOLF PATH



HUMAN PATH



[When you fill up both tracks, choose another advance or +1 to a stat of your choice up to a max +3]

HARM PHASES



PACKMATES

Which Packmate do you hero-worship? What could they do to break that trust? They take a +1 Tie on you.

When you complete a scene resolving this tension, take +1 Pack Pool and write a new question.

WHO YOU GOT TIES ON?

CUB SPECIAL MOVES

[Choose two starting moves]

FREE PASS

You can break one order from the Alpha, and one Tradition, without rolling to Disobey and without sanction from the Alpha or anyone else.

After that you should know better!

Order from the Alpha:



Tradition:



OVERPROTECTED

You are everyone's kid brother or sister and everyone is looking out for you. Once per session, if you get in over your head, a Packmate will come and help you out. The Packmate who comes to your aid gets a +1 Tie on you and can advance one space on their path (Human or Wolf – their choice).

HEARTSTRINGS [HEART]

When you Dominate a Packmate using your emotions, roll Heart not Teeth.

SCRAPPING [HEART]

When you express your emotions physically, like cubs scrapping for dominance, or almost-lovers who can't say what they mean, roll +Heart.

This is like a deep conversation late into the night for humans, but with more bite.

10+ The Packmate automatically makes the Spill Move, but you get to pick which of the four options they spill about. In return they automatically Provoke Spill on you at the 7-9 result (and the 10+ option does not apply)

7-9 ask one question which your Packmate has to answer truthfully.

0-6 describe how your Packmate misinterprets your intention and emotion.

WE ARE FAMILY

You can erase up to two spaces on your Wolf/Human path per session and add the number erased as Pack Pool points. These points in the Pack Pool cannot be spent by or on the Cub, so keep track of that here:

SEX MOVE

If you and another Player Character have sex, then the next time they are threatened, if you put yourself in harm's way for them add +1 to all rolls until you are both safe again.



THE ENFORCER

Every Pack has someone willing to cross a line to protect their family, to do what is necessary to ensure their survival. Someone the Alpha can use as the ultimate threat. That is you. Your loyalty to Pack and Alpha is strong and unshakeable: but do you embrace your role, or carry it as a burden for those you love? Do you have any limits when pushed to the brink? – and what do your nearest and dearest think when you go beyond the line?

NAME Clay, Ben, Ellory, Strike, Ash, Edgardo, Imani, Jamin, Jian, Greta, Gabe, Mia, Abilene, Tamika, Noah, Nash, Clarissa, Kanaye, Zuberi

PRONOUN he, she, they

LOOK

[Choose all that apply]:

- ☐ Androgynous, Genderqueer, Femme, Masc
- ☐ Dark eyes, Angry eyes, Deep eyes, Red eyes, Light eyes
- ☐ Lithe, Heavy, Tall, Short, Broad, Wiry, Curvy, Muscular
- ☐ Dark skin, Pale skin, Brown skin, Scarred skin, Rough skin, Tattooed skin
- ☐ Long hair, Short hair, Curly hair, Straight hair, Thin hair, Thick hair, Locs, Braids, Shaved, Bald
- ☐ [insert your own choice]

HEARTBEAT

[Choose three]: Dangerous, Fast, Passionate, Fiery, Wide, Loyal, Obsessed, Enraged, Irresistible, Wild, Acerbic, Guilty

STATS

[Choose one stat and add +1]

TEETH +2

HEART 0

GUTS -1

FERAL +1

WOLF PATH



HUMAN PATH



[When you fill up both tracks, choose another advance or +1 to a stat of your choice up to a max +3]

HARM PHASES



PACKMATES

What is the most shameful thing you ever did to protect the pack? Which Packmate knows about it? They take a +1 Tie on you.

When you complete a scene resolving this tension, take +1 Pack Pool and write a new question.

WHO YOU GOT TIES ON?

ENFORCER SPECIAL MOVES

[Choose two starting moves]

BORROW TROUBLE [FERAL]

Redirect trouble from someone or something to yourself. Roll on Feral:

10+ you and the person you are protecting escape the current danger.

7–9 you are successful and the trouble is redirected. Choose one: you take +1 harm; you lose a Tie on someone; –1 to the Pack Pool; or the MC can require you to roll to Disobey if appropriate.

0–6 the trouble hits both you and the person you were trying to protect.

CROSS THE LINE

Do something unacceptable, something shocking. When you make this move you are declaring something to be beyond a line. You get one automatic Domination success, as if you had rolled a 10+, to spend on one person in the immediate scene. Choose a Pack member who is disgusted with you: they get a +1 Tie on you even if they were not present in the scene.

LONE WOLF

You can spend points from the Pack pool even when you are acting on your own. You cannot spend points from the Pack Pool on the Disobey or Make a Challenge Moves.

HEART OF STONE

When you inflict harm, inflict +1 Harm.

BORN IN BLOOD

Take +1 Teeth (max +3).

SEX MOVE

If you and another Player Character have sex, you tell them about your guilty heart. If they reject you afterwards, take +2 to your next action to defend them; if they don't reject you, take +1 to your next action to defend them.



THE FIXER

Well, someone has to deal with the mortal world: luckily, you just love it. The Pack is your home and your family, but mortals hold a fascination for you, and you know their world just as well as your own. You love the way they smell, feel, and taste; and they love you back. Which is handy when the Pack needs money, information, or something disappearing. But, you exist between two worlds, more so than anyone else: and it pulls you apart.

NAME Antonio, Demothi, Camilla, Victoria, Corey, Teresa, Jax, Ward, Danny, Allie, Matt, Hadyn, Stefan, Eulalia, Ezra, Kana, Li, Nadir

PRONOUN he, she, they

LOOK

[Choose all that apply]:

- ☐ Androgynous, Genderqueer, Femme, Masc
- ☐ Dark eyes, Angry eyes, Deep eyes, Red eyes, Light eyes
- ☐ Lithe, Heavy, Tall, Short, Broad, Wiry, Curvy, Muscular
- ☐ Dark skin, Pale skin, Brown skin, Scarred skin, Rough skin, Tattooed skin
- ☐ Long hair, Short hair, Curly hair, Straight hair, Thin hair, Thick hair, Locs, Braids, Shaved, Bald
- ☐ [insert your own choice]

HEARTBEAT

[Choose three]: Charming, Clever, Quick, Fucking Gorgeous, Charismatic, Romantic, Connected, Hungry, Confident, Selfish, Responsible, Audacious, Torn

STATS

[Choose one stat and add +1]

TEETH 0

HEART +1

GUTS +1

FERAL 0

WOLF PATH ○○○

HUMAN PATH ○○○

[When you fill up both tracks, choose another advance or +1 to a stat of your choice up to a max +3]

HARM PHASES



PACKMATES

Why do you feel you want to leave the Pack? Which Packmate could get you to stay, and why? They take a +1 Tie on you.

When you complete a scene resolving this tension, take +1 Pack Pool and write a new question.

WHO YOU GOT TIES ON?

FIXER SPECIAL MOVES

[Choose two starting moves]

MAKE IT GO AWAY [TEETH]

Once per session when you use your contacts and resources to smooth over a problem in the human world roll +Teeth. Blocking planning permission through your Territory, dead bodies to dispose of, police knocking at your door, a journalist snooping? You make the problem go away.

10+ you succeed: in fact that the person who helps you out is so disarmed by you that they think they owe you a favour now.

7–9 you succeed, but someone has dirt on you.

0–6 the MC makes a Hard Move.

RESOURCES [HEART]

Choose two spheres of influence. When you ask your contacts to help you with an action then add a +1 ongoing for all related rolls until the action is completed; or transfer the +1 ongoing to another player if they are completing the action instead of you.

Police, Politics, Celebrity, Crime, Cyber, Technology, Business, Academia, Social Media, Unions/Labour, Religion, Occult, Military.

SNIFF IT OUT [HEART]

When you work your contacts for information roll Heart.

10+ ask two questions from the below list, **7–9** ask one:

- Ⓒ Who/what is really behind this?
- Ⓒ Who has what I need?
- Ⓒ How long have I got?
- Ⓒ What did I miss the first time?
- Ⓒ How can I personally gain from this situation?
- Ⓒ How can I use this situation to impress someone in the Pack?
- Ⓒ What do I need to cut a deal?

0–6 the MC makes a Hard Move

A COOL HEAD

Take +1 Guts (max +3).

GONE TO GROUND

If someone needs to hide something or someone, then you can do it. You will pull your contacts, call in favours, clean the trails. When you hide something/someone it stays hidden (not bodies though! You need Make it Go Away for that).

SEX MOVE

If you and another Player Character have sex, then you owe them a big, romantic gesture. You just want do something awesome for them.



THE GREYPELT

The oldest and wisest among us. The Greypelt remembers the earliest days of the Pack, the battles and rivalries of the long past, the wolves who died before we came to this life of teeth and rending. The Greypelt is an esteemed elder, a former Alpha, Mother and Father to us all.

NAME Vera, Douglas, Granger, Ruby, Jack, Grandfather/mother, Old Dog, Babushka, Lillian, Silas, Zeke, Nini, Akilah, Boman, Hakim, Labiba, Solomon, Tallis

PRONOUN he, she, they

LOOK

[Choose all that apply]:

- ☐ Androgynous, Genderqueer, Femme, Masc
- ☐ Dark eyes, Angry eyes, Deep eyes, Red eyes, Light eyes
- ☐ Lithe, Heavy, Tall, Short, Broad, Wiry, Curvy, Muscular
- ☐ Dark skin, Pale skin, Brown skin, Scarred skin, Rough skin, Tattooed skin
- ☐ Long hair, Short hair, Curly hair, Straight hair, Thin hair, Thick hair, Locs, Braids, Shaved, Bald
- ☐ [insert your own choice]

HEARTBEAT

[Choose three]: Measured, Calm, Knowing, Wise, Steady, Experienced, Scarred, Defeated, Ending, Disillusioned, Parental, Gentle, Stem

STATS:

[Choose one stat and add +1]

TEETH 0

HEART +1

GUTS -1

FERAL +2

WOLF PATH



HUMAN PATH



[When you fill up both tracks, choose another advance or +1 to a stat of your choice up to a max +3]

HARM PHASES



PACKMATES

You have lived for many years and have done many things over your life. You have made many enemies. Which Packmate did you betray, and how? They take a +1 Tie on you.

When you complete a scene resolving this tension, take +1 Pack Pool and write a new question.

WHO YOU GOT TIES ON?

GREYPELT SPECIAL MOVES

[Choose two starting moves]

LOREKEEPER

You are the keeper of the Pack history, records of the members, knowledge about other packs and the packless. You know why the traditions and laws of the Pack are in place, and you keep the lists of who has broken them and been cast out. When information is requested about these matters, you must narrate the answers: mark off one circle on the Wolf/Human path of your choice, and add 1 to the Pack Pool.

DRAW ON THE PACK

You may draw on the power of the Pack to heal a Pack member. You do not need to fulfill the normal conditions for spending Pack Pool – if there are Pack Pool points available then you can spend them with this Move. You choose whether to spend 1, 2, or 3 points (crossing the points off the Pack Sheet) and roll +points spent. If there are no Pack Points then you can make this move at +0

Roll +Pack Pool (1–3 points as you choose).

To **Stabilise and Revive** someone in the 7th–9th phase range or to **Heal** someone in the 1st–6th phase range:

10+ Heal 3 phases.

7–9 Heal 2 phases and the MC can choose one:

- Ⓒ They gain the heartbeat Wounded.
- Ⓒ They are unconscious for 24 hours, during which time their spirit wanders: they can ask the MC one question and receive a useful answer.
- Ⓒ They will be unable to Change – whatever form they are currently in, they will stay that way for 48 hours.
- Ⓒ The next time they use Dominate/Mauling they automatically have to make a Give in to the Wolf Move.
- Ⓒ They blurt out a secret whilst they are slipping in and out of consciousness.
- Ⓒ One Packmate receives +1 Harm attempting to restrain them for treatment.
- Ⓒ They lose +1 Harm.

0–6 They are not healed, stabilised or revived and the MC can choose two of the above list.

WISE COUNSEL

When you give advice, if the Packmate acts on it they will get a +1 to any one related roll, and you take a +1 Tie on them.

I REMEMBER WHEN YOU WERE KNEE HIGH

You only have to use the move Make a Challenge when you are actively trying to take over the Pack. In all other situations you can choose to Dominate, including dominating the Alpha.

CLOSE TO THE WILD

When you Dominate someone in Wolf form roll Feral instead of Teeth.

SEX MOVE

When you have sex with another Player Character, they remind you of an old mistake you do not want to make again. State some new information about the current situation/threat facing the Pack from the insights you have gained.



THE HOWL

The Alpha may lead the Pack in this life but you shepherd them in spirit. You can be the Alpha's best friend and ally, or you can be biding your time to rid the Pack of an Alpha who threatens you all to damnation. Or worse... you can be both.

NAME Zebulon, Shamir, Harlow, Winter, Ghost, Freki, Sage, Kraken, Whisper, Halo, Pythia, Shame, Anata, Cantrix, Gayatri, Kaleo, Seda, Xenophon

PRONOUN he, she, they

LOOK

[Choose all that apply]:

- ☐ Androgynous, Genderqueer, Femme, Masc
- ☐ Dark eyes, Angry eyes, Deep eyes, Red eyes, Light eyes
- ☐ Lithe, Heavy, Tall, Short, Broad, Wiry, Curvy, Muscular
- ☐ Dark skin, Pale skin, Brown skin, Scarred skin, Rough skin, Tattooed skin
- ☐ Long hair, Short hair, Curly hair, Straight hair, Thin hair, Thick hair, Locs, Braids, Shaved, Bald
- ☐ [insert your own choice]



HEARTBEAT

[Choose three]: Sacrificing, Inspiring, Comforting, Crusading, Loving, Doubting, Undermining, Secretive, Persuasive, Calculating, Charismatic, Enigmatic

STATS

TEETH +1

HEART +2

GUTS 0

FERAL -1

WOLF PATH



HUMAN PATH



[When you fill up both tracks, choose another advance or +1 to a stat of your choice up to a max +3.]

HARM PHASES



PACKMATES

You predicted someone would die... and they did. Who were they, how did they die, and which Packmate cannot forgive you for not saving them? They take a +1 Tie on you.

When you complete a scene resolving this tension, take +1 Pack Pool and write a new question.

WHO YOU GOT TIES ON?

HOWL SPECIAL MOVES

[Choose two starting moves]

GEAS

When you say – “Don’t tell another soul” and share a secret with a Packmate, add +1 to the Pack Pool and take a +1 Tie on them. To reveal that secret that Packmate must make a Disobey Move, and if they succeed then you take another +1 Tie on them.

PROPHECY

When you consume the flesh of a willing Packmate make one short, prophetic statement about that Packmate.

If the Prophecy is short-term, then give the Packmate a choice: you can either warn them of something in their future and give them +1 forward to avoid it, or describe a future opportunity and give them +1 forward to seize it.

If the Prophecy is long-term then you each mark one box of your choice on the Wolf/Human Path.





SPEAK WITH THE DEAD [HEART]

When you consume the flesh of the recently dead roll +Heart. On a **10+** ask two of the following questions, on a **7–9** ask one:

- Ⓒ Who were you?
- Ⓒ Who killed you?
- Ⓒ Who sent you?
- Ⓒ Why are you here?
- Ⓒ Why did you die?
- Ⓒ What did you want when you were alive?
- Ⓒ What was your secret?
- Ⓒ What do I need to know?

0–6 MC makes a Hard Move.

SILVER TONGUE [HEART]

When you attempt to persuade a Packmate to comply with or ignore a Tradition, disobey or obey the Alpha, or challenge the Alpha, roll +Heart. When using this Move if you would normally trigger the “Make a Challenge” Move instead then ignore “Make a Challenge”.

10+ If the Packmate is an NPC, they do what you want and a little something more. If they are a PC and agree to do what you want, they get +1 forward to act on it and you get a +1 Tie on them.

7–9 If the Packmate is an NPC they do what you want but with a complication. If they are a PC and they agree to do what you want, they get +1 forward to act on it

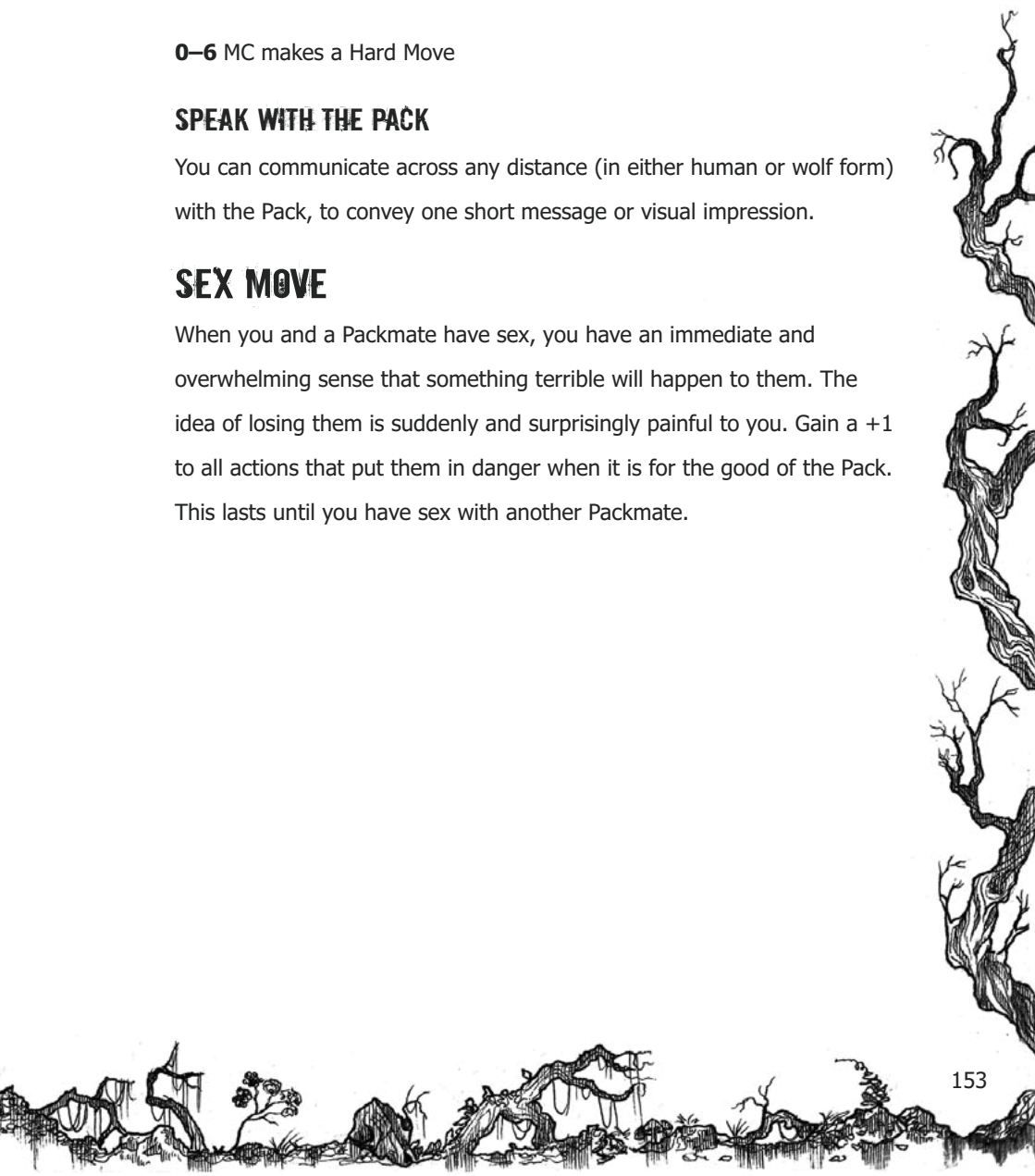
0–6 MC makes a Hard Move

SPEAK WITH THE PACK

You can communicate across any distance (in either human or wolf form) with the Pack, to convey one short message or visual impression.

SEX MOVE

When you and a Packmate have sex, you have an immediate and overwhelming sense that something terrible will happen to them. The idea of losing them is suddenly and surprisingly painful to you. Gain a +1 to all actions that put them in danger when it is for the good of the Pack. This lasts until you have sex with another Packmate.



THE PRODIGAL

You used to be in the Pack and you left. Circumstance has reluctantly pulled you back – you're here and you're committed, for now. But it is hard finding your place again. Some have welcomed you back with an embrace, some resent you, and one in particular you are avoiding.

NAME Elena, Doc, Bug, Shade, Grace, Poe, Hex, Michael, Nadia, Paine, Gasp, Preen, Abeni, Babatunde, Igashu, Kymani, Nestor, Saira

PRONOUN he, she, they

LOOK

[Choose all that apply]:

- ☐ Androgynous, Genderqueer, Femme, Masc
- ☐ Dark eyes, Angry eyes, Deep eyes, Red eyes, Light eyes
- ☐ Lithe, Heavy, Tall, Short, Broad, Wiry, Curvy, Muscular
- ☐ Dark skin, Pale skin, Brown skin, Scarred skin, Rough skin, Tattooed skin
- ☐ Long hair, Short hair, Curly hair, Straight hair, Thin hair, Thick hair, Locs, Braids, Shaved, Bald
- ☐ [insert your own choice]

HEARTBEAT

[Choose three]: Bruised, Distrustful, Heart-broken, Loving, Scared, Vital, Secretive, Homesick, Drowning, Lost, Unsure

STATS

[Choose one stat
and add +1]

TEETH +1

HEART -1

GUTS +2

FERAL 0

WOLF PATH



HUMAN PATH



[When you fill up both tracks, choose another
advance or +1 to a stat of your choice up to a
max +3]

HARM PHASES



PACKMATES

Which Packmate did it hurt you the most to leave behind? How do they
feel about your return? They take a +1 Tie on you.

When you complete a scene resolving this tension, take +1 Pack Pool
and write a new question.

WHO YOU GOT TIES ON?

PRÓDIGAL SPECIAL MOVES

[Choose two starting moves]

HEART GROWS FONDER

When you Dominate a Packmate by leveraging your relationship, you can
choose to roll your Ties against them instead of Teeth, if it is higher.

ONE FOR THE TEAM

Subsume your needs for the needs of the Pack: take +1 forward and add +1 to the Pack Pool.

CALL IN A FAVOUR

You have made strong ties outside the Pack in the time you were apart from them. Erase +1 point of Tie on any Packmate to buy a favour from someone outside the Pack. This must be a favour which someone would reasonably give e.g. 'give me a place to lie low for a couple of days' is a reasonable favour; 'kill someone for me' is not a reasonable favour.

SET APART

Take +1 Guts (max +3). You been away a long time: it is easier to resist your nature, Traditions, and orders from the Alpha.

HEALING [GUTS]

Wolves can't exactly go to the hospital, so you are the trained medic of the Pack. You can keep a cool head, stitch and wound and save a life. But someone died while you were away from the Pack, and someone hasn't forgiven you for that. Choose who died, and a Packmate to take a +1 Tie on you for your guilt.

When you are Healing someone, roll Guts or your Ties against them (your choice).

To **Stabilise and Revive** someone in the 7th–9th phase range or to **Heal** someone in the 1st–6th phase range:

10+ Heal 3 phases.

7–9 Heal 2 phases and the MC can choose one:

- Ⓒ They need to be restrained before you can move them.
- Ⓒ They will be unconscious for a few hours.
- Ⓒ They will be unable to Change – whatever form they are currently in, they will stay that way for 48 hours.
- Ⓒ You need to get some specialised medical supplies.
- Ⓒ They will need extra attention and care for 36 hours.

0–6 They are not healed, stabilised or revived and the MC can choose two of the above list.

SEX MOVE

If you and another Player Character have sex, then the overwhelming sense of being at the heart of the Pack again damages your control of the wolf. The next time you feel under threat you must make the move Give In To The Wolf.



PACK PLAYBOOK

PACK CULTURE

Circle at least three items from the below list, in addition to Shared Slang which you must take. These are the bits of shared culture which bind the Pack together, small but powerful. Each time you demonstrate them in play, cross off a circle on either the Wolf Path or the Human Path (depending on the form you are in when you display the culture).

- Ⓒ Run and hunt together as wolves – any chance you get!
- Ⓒ Wait for the Alpha to eat first.
- Ⓒ Shared Slang: agree five words of shared slang. (You can use the slang as much as you like but can only cross off one circle per session)
- Ⓒ Physical closeness – you are always hugging, falling asleep on each other, ruffling hair, fighting and jumping on each other.
- Ⓒ Look at the floor when admonished by the Alpha.
- Ⓒ Dress Code: is there something in the way you all look: sharp suits, lumberjack chic, dolly kei, biker or 1950s housewives. You don't look identical but there is a shared style.
- Ⓒ Taboos – unacceptable behaviour, something you don't talk about.
- Ⓒ Food Rituals - food is important, you have rituals around it and enjoyment of it binds you together.
- Ⓒ [Invent your own.]

TRADITIONS

Write down three Pack Traditions in this space:

E.g. Secrecy – not a single soul must know about the existence of the werewolves and you must kill any who discover your secret.

Write down which NPC was banished from the Pack for violating a Tradition, and what happened.

Which player character has secretly violated a Tradition? What happened and which other play character knows about it?

These aren't cultural expressions as above, but more like oral laws. You don't necessarily know why they are in place, but everyone knows they are important and abides by them... well apart from that one wolf whose name is only spoken of in whispers.



PACK MOVES

Any Pack member can choose to make one of these moves when the Pack is acting as a Pack. That means at least two Packmates standing together and acting on the order of the Alpha and in accordance with the Traditions.

OVERWHELM THEM. Pay [12] Pack Pool and no matter the odds, no matter your differences, the Pack comes together and fights as one. Nothing can withstand you, and this battle is yours. Everyone describes one awesome thing they did; and the Packmate who chose to make this move describes the overall, glorious victory.

DEFEND TERRITORY. Pay [8] Pack Pool. This place is yours, your sanctuary, your stronghold, your home. When the Pack defends its home territory, each Packmate can improve their next roll on one of Dominate, Maul or Give in to the Wolf by one category (i.e. turn a miss into a weak hit or a weak hit into a strong hit) during the scene.

IN YOUR NATURE. Pay [10] Pack Pool. You knew the enemy would make that move, and you had a contingency planned. What is it?

PACK POOL

[Keep a tally of the Pack Pool Points below.]

MC-AID SHEET

MC PRINCIPLES

- 1 Drive wedges between the Packmates
- 2 Threaten the Pack into unity
- 3 Make the world smell real
- 4 Make space for the Packmates to express themselves
- 5 Make the PCs feel badass
- 6 Reinforce Pack culture and Traditions by NPCs actions and words
- 7 Offer situations, not plot
- 8 Make it hurt!

MC MOVES

SOFT MOVES

- ⌋ Sow discord in the Pack
- ⌋ Offer an opportunity with or without a cost
- ⌋ Foreshadow a threat
- ⌋ Tempt Packmates to break Traditions/Disobey orders
- ⌋ Highlight a Threat or an untenable situation

HARD MOVES

- ⌋ If the Alpha is an NPC – have them do something terrible
- ⌋ If the Alpha is a PC – give them a horrible choice
- ⌋ Separate the Pack
- ⌋ Inflict Harm
- ⌋ Threaten them with discovery
- ⌋ Threaten them with their nature
- ⌋ Explode an untenable situation
- ⌋ Shove a Threat in their face

**NOTES FOR THREATS, TENSE RELATIONSHIPS
AND UNTENABLE SITUATIONS
NOTES FOR NPCs**



RELATIONSHIP MAP

An empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a relationship map entry.

An empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a relationship map entry.

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An empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a relationship map entry.





SCENARIOS

SCENARIOS

HOW TO USE SCENARIOS

Scenario create a quick start for a game, and are ideal to use for a one-shot at a convention – or in a single session with your gaming group, when you either don't have time for a longer world building session, or where normal world building would create too much material to play through in a satisfying way.

The setting will give enough of a flavour to let everyone understand the time period, setting, and relevant background. The Skins and NPCs have been chosen to tightly fit the scenario, to allow the MC and players to create a single story in a short session. The scenario will revolve around a central provocative question (the Scenario Question) which directs the story and action and keeps it to one tighter storyline than a typical Powered by the Apocalypse game. But the scenario only provides a more detailed starting point and suggestions for tensions, threats and crises. It does not provide a plot or an expected outcome.

A scenario does not answer any of the Packmate questions on the Skins. This allows the players to tailor their relationships and gives them control over the most important bit of the story – how they feel about each other.

You should aim to answer the Scenario Question through playing the game. For example, the question “Who is the new Alpha?”, from the Beasts of Bodmin scenario, makes an excellent climactic scene to end the session in a satisfying way.

SETUP

STEP 1 – Start the session by asking the players to pick from the pre-determined Skins, and then go through the Packmate questions to set up the relationships. As the relationships are agreed, ensure that you tie the details of the player’s answers into the existing setting, and particularly set up tensions around the Scenario Question. For example, with the Scenario Question asking “Who will take over as Alpha?”, as the players answer their relationship questions you might like to follow up with “Would you give them your support if they wanted to challenge for control of the Pack?” or “Do you think that their breach of the Traditions means they should never be Alpha?” Ask clarifying questions that get the players thinking about their messy relationships in the same terms as the Scenario Question.

STEP 2 – In addition to the relationships and the Scenario Question, there is a list of other characters who may appear. In the descriptions for these characters there are suggested relationships they may have with the players. If you have four players instead of five then consider reassigning the missing relationship (if necessary to the story).

STEP 3 – The vital details of the Pack Playbook have also been pre-agreed except for one slot of culture. Get the players to fill in that final slot as a group: and if necessary use a question to prompt them, such as “Do you have a special ritual for meals?”

STEP 4 – There is a list of Traditions in the Pack Playbook – **in setup you must agree one player character who has broken a Tradition, and one other player character who knows about it and is keeping their secret.** Once the relationships are established through the Packmates questions on the skins, use this final question about Traditions to fill in any gaps in the relationship map.

STEP 5 – Go through the list of Other Characters in the section below. Some of these descriptions contain questions that you need to ask the players about their relationships with these other characters.

STEP 6 – Start the first scene with something which allows the Pack to show how great they are when they work together. A crisis of some sort is excellent, because it starts the game with high stakes, tension, and a reason to pull together. This gives you more scope to draw out the tensions in the pack at a later point in the session – having first shown everyone how great it feels when things are good!

THE BEASTS OF BODMIN

A *Bite Marks* scenario for 4–5 players by Becky Annison

SETTING

The Miller family have owned a farm in the heart of Bodmin Moor for generations. Bodmin is a wild and untamed granite moorland, dotted with dangerous marsh and prone to sudden and impenetrable fogs. The Miller farm has been the most isolated homestead in that part of Cornwall for over a hundred and fifty years. This isolation has served the family and its closest allies well, allowing them to change, run, and hunt with no-one for miles in any direction. But the modern world is moving fast; and by now, in the searing heatwave of 2018 the Millers have fracking companies and environmentalists camped on their doorstep. Some wanting to take their land, some wanting to 'help', and all of them interfering.

The Pack are in danger of losing their territory: and that would mean dissolution of the Pack, as there are no other unclaimed, wild lands left in the UK. The leadership of the Alpha, Old Ma Reeney, has never been more tested. She has taken extreme measures: engaged a human lawyer; called Doc, the Prodigal home; and laid down a new Pack tradition banning hunting! There are simply too many people coming and going to maintain their secrecy for much longer. The Pack are stressed by the heat, the confinement, and the sense of their territory being invaded.





Today is the day of the Pack Moot. Alphas from across the United Kingdom are coming to Bodmin to discuss Pack business; there are old rivalries and alliances and new enemies among them. The farm will be filled with werewolves, temperatures are at boiling point, and the human world is far too close for comfort...

Last night Old Ma Reeney went missing.

MC NOTES

This is not a mystery story. The players may want to spend ages hunting down Old Ma and approaching it like a murder mystery. But that is not what this game is about. Don't dangle the mystery in front of them and get bogged down in following trails of clues. If the players spend too much time on investigating either;

- 1 Make it clear what has happened to Old Ma (choose something which will make things even messier given where the story is at that particular moment – perhaps Seth killed her in order to assure his ascendancy to the Alpha position), or
- 2 pull them back into the tension with other more immediate concerns like humans encroaching on the land, or the rival werewolves arriving.

What has happened to Old Ma should be decided according to what makes for the most dramatic story – the thing mostly likely to blow up into a brutal fight! Was it Seth getting rid of her for his own purposes? Did Red and Ghost do it to destabilise the territory? Or did Jericho discover that she'd lost control of the Beast, and remove her before she revealed everything to the humans?

Once you know the shifting relationships in the Pack and how they react to the initial situation, you can choose the fate of Old Ma to create the most drama.

One rule – Old Ma isn't coming back to the Pack. They will need a new Alpha somehow, somehow.

SCENARIO QUESTION

Who will be the new Alpha?

SKINS

THE PRODIGAL DOG

- ☾ **HEARTBEATS** Bruised, Loving, Drowning
- ☾ **STATS** Teeth +2, Heart -1, Guts +2, Feral 0
- ☾ **MOVES** One for the Team, Healing
- ☾ Horizon – brutal Enforcer to Jericho, a rival pack Alpha – is in love with you.



THE CUB: YELP

- ⌋ **HEARTBEATS** Playful, Innocent, Struggling
- ⌋ **STATS** Teeth 0, Heart +2, Guts +1, Feral 0
- ⌋ **MOVES** Overprotected, Heartstrings
- ⌋ You really enjoy hanging out with the environmentalists (especially Oakenshield), even though packmates have warned you to stay away from the humans.

THE ENFORCER: MIA

- ⌋ **HEARTBEATS** Dangerous, Loyal, Guilty
- ⌋ **STATS** Teeth +3, Heart 0, Guts -1, Feral +1
- ⌋ **MOVES** Borrow Trouble, Cross the Line
- ⌋ There are rumours that the Howl of the Wessex Pack has had a vision about you. Something that has got everyone over there worried.

THE GREYPELT: NINI

- ⌋ **HEARTBEATS** Calm, Wise, Defeated
- ⌋ **STATS** Teeth 0, Heart +1, Guts -1, Feral +3
- ⌋ **MOVES** Lorekeeper, Close to the Wild
- ⌋ Red, leader of the Wessex Pack, is your sister. Something tore you apart and made you leave for the Miller family pack.

THE FIXER: JAX

- ☾ **HEARTBEATS** Fucking gorgeous, Hungry, Audacious
- ☾ **STATS** Teeth 0, Heart +1, Guts +2, Feral 0
- ☾ **MOVES** Sniff it out, Gone to Ground
- ☾ The local police constable owes you a favour.
- ☾ The representative of the fracking company Mrs Reilly owes you a massive favour.

PACK PLAYBOOK**CULTURE**

- ☾ [Empty slot for the players]
- ☾ Eating humans is taboo (but does happen).
- ☾ When you are on the farm you pitch in with farm chores.

SLANG

- ☾ **Loners** – wolves without pack, objects of derision and pity.
- ☾ **The Change** – turning into wolf form.
- ☾ **The Beast** – when you lose control and go completely feral.
- ☾ **The Rendering** – hunting down and killing someone marked by the Alpha as an enemy of the Pack. A ritual killing.
- ☾ **Cub** – either a young werewolf, or the bitten child of a werewolf.





TRADITIONS

- ⌋ New werewolves can only be created with the permission of the Alpha.
- ⌋ The Pack hunts together on every Blue Moon.
- ⌋ Humans must never know about werewolves; those who find out are killed.
- ⌋ And the new one... NO HUNTING.

OTHER IMPORTANT PEOPLE

SETH MILLER Old Ma's only surviving son. He is aggressive, loud and acts like he will be ruling the Pack one day. In fact being Alpha is the only thing he cares about in this world. No-one likes him, but he is Pack.

JERICO Leader of the Frost Wolves, a pack from the Far North of Scotland. Vicious and wild, they are old enemies of the Miller family. Relations have been strained but polite in recent years. However, word has reached the Millers that Jericho is angry about something and spoiling for a fight.

RED Alpha of the Wessex territories, traditionally an ally of the Miller family. Her influence has grown a lot in recent years whilst Old Ma has come under more and more pressure. **Red is Nini's sister.** Some terrible rift between the two of them is the reason Nini is part of the Miller family and not the Wessex Pack. But that is all ancient history... isn't it?

Ask Nini's player: why is Nini not in the same pack as Red?

HORIZON Jericho's bodyguard and Enforcer. Brutal, efficient and **in love with Doc.**

GHOST Red's Howl, an enigmatic and animalistic figure. More wolf than human. **They have had a vision of Mia that has got the Wessex Pack very worried. What is that vision?**

SOME HUMANS

PC PATEL Local police officer who only ventures out as far as the farm when there is something really wrong. **Jax has pulled PC Patel out of a tight spot with local toughs more than once, and PC Patel knows there is a debt to be paid.**

BAKENSHELD a well-meaning activist, leading the environmentalists camped out on the edge of Turner farm. They are patiently waiting to fight the frackers. **Yelp can't stop hanging around these guys, and no-one thinks that is a good idea.**

MRS SIMONE REILLY the fracking company's 'woman on the ground'. She represents the company in all things, and is determined to get access to the Miller's land by any means necessary: **but she owes Jax big time! What is the debt that Mrs Reilly need to pay to Jax?**



THREATS AND UNTENABLE SITUATIONS

- Ⓒ Pack territory is under heightened scrutiny by humans (the frackers, the environmentalists, and potentially the police); if something happens then the chances of humans finding out are high.
- Ⓒ The Pack itself is under massive stress – the Blue Moon is approaching, no-one has hunted in months, and the searing heat of the day is unusual and unpleasant. Tensions are running high and there is no longer an Alpha to keep them in check. You now have two opposing traditions, and no Alpha to make a decision about which one to follow!
- Ⓒ There are two other Alphas and their senior people about to arrive. If they sense any weakness in the Pack, they may seek to take either the territory or the Pack itself for their own. It is highly likely that the presence of these other Packs may provoke some sort of bloody crisis which cannot be cleaned up before the humans get wind of it.
- Ⓒ The Prodigal has returned: their departure was a betrayal, and someone will kick off about it. Maybe several people.

TENSE RELATIONSHIPS

[Blank for MC notes]



WOLVES OF THE KLONDIKE

A *Bite Marks* scenario for 4–5 players by Kelley Armstrong

SETTING

For the outcast werewolves of California, Gilbert's plan shines like gold glittering in the frozen depths of the Yukon River. Too many werewolf packs have emigrated west, dreaming of endless territory, only to find themselves competing tooth and nail for scraps. When packs contract by driving out their youngest, their weakest, and their strangest wolves, Gilbert and his mate, Royal, gather them up and weave them a dream of a glittering future. They'll follow the hordes heading into the north, on the trail of Klondike gold; and there they'll find their fortune and their future in a new world perfect for their kind.

What they've found is what hundred of thousands of humans discovered in 1892 – that the path to that glittering gold is paved with death and despair. They caught a steamship in San Francisco, paying a month's wages each to be crammed on with hundreds of other hopeful prospectors. Packed in tight, tempers frayed, the werewolves more than others, their close proximity to humans making them anxious, on guard twenty-four hours a day. When a man tried to steal from the youngest Pack member – Azariah – one of their brothers, Jacob, attacked and killed the thief. Jacob was sentenced to death by the mob and thrown overboard. This death – and the fact that Gilbert did not intercede – still resonates with the Klondike Pack.

There were two routes from Alaska to Dawson City. One went from Skagway through the treacherous White Pass. The other was the Chilkoot trail, an easier route... except for the fifteen-hundred-step Golden Stairs, cut out of ice and snow. As pioneer Mont Hawthorn said, comparing the two routes. "There's no choice. One's hell. The other's damnation."

Gilbert chose the Chilkoot trail. When they arrived, they learned that the Canadian North-West Mounted police wouldn't let anyone take the trail into the Yukon without a year's worth of supplies. That meant one thousand pounds to carry – in endless trips – up those fifteen hundred treacherous steps.

This is not what anyone had in mind. The voyage was hard enough on the Pack, and now they're looking at months traversing some the most challenging terrain imaginable with no promise that the gold will still be there when they arrive. They can't turn back now, though. They've invested everything they have, and they have nothing to go back to in California.

On Palm Sunday, 1898, the Pack had half their supplies up the stairs when disaster struck. An avalanche buried 60 prospectors. Among those presumed dead are Gilbert and half the Klondike Pack.

Word of the disaster has just reached Royal and the other half of the Pack at the base of the trail.



MC NOTES

While the avalanche is a historical event, the MC may choose to move the date to make winter more of an impending threat.

The avalanche is the inciting incident. The Pack has just learned what happened to the others and is deciding whether to try digging them out or pushing on. The Pack will eventually push on – the central question is not one to be considered at this point. The options arise as the journey progresses until a boiling point is reached.

The first choice to be made is “to dig or not to dig”. If the players attempt to dig out the others, they will not retrieve Gilbert. It is up to the MC’s discretion how many Pack members they find... or lose in the attempt. Three other Pack members were lost: James, Amelia and Dotty.

The second choice could be (at the MC’s discretion) to a) find a way up to half their supplies at the top or b) sail back to Skagway and attempt the White Pass trail.

Remember that Charlie has the money and owns the supplies. If at any point, the Pack fractures, those disagreeing with Charlie go it alone, which would be nearly impossible. Even Yael is accustomed to a much more hospitable climate. Group consensus is required, or the Alpha will need to successfully Dominate the rebellious Packmates.

A few historical notes on the journey to bear in mind. With the date above, they are arriving at the end of the rush (though they will not realize that). Only one third of those who set out made it to Dawson City. Once past the Chilkoot or White Pass, they have a long foot trip and then a river trip ahead of them, and they must make it before winter (which arrives early in the north).

SCENARIO QUESTION

How will the Klondike Pack choose to make their fortune? Push on to the gold, settle in the wilderness or prey on gullible prospectors?

SKINS

THE ALPHA: ROYAL

- ☾ **HEARTBEATS:** Controlled, Steady, Yearning
- ☾ **STATS:** Teeth +1, Heart +2, Guts 0, Feral 0
- ☾ **MOVES:** Hearts & Minds, We Are Pack
- ☾ While you were the one who turned Gilbert's visionary dreams into reality, all your Pack saw was their charismatic leader. Now that he's gone, you need to prove you're the real Alpha... and always have been. You support Riley's option of making money and starting a colony. The Pack believes this was Gilbert's vision – it was actually yours.



THE CUB: AZARIAH

- Ⓒ **HEARTBEATS:** Frustrated, Angry, Struggling
- Ⓒ **STATS:** Teeth 0, Heart +2, Guts 0, Feral +1
- Ⓒ **MOVES:** Overprotected, Scrapping
- Ⓒ You were the one who killed your fellow passenger for stealing your food, reacting on instincts you can't quite control yet. Your brother took the blame... and died for it. Royal is the only other Pack member who knows this. Of the three options, you inwardly support Royal's vision, but outwardly need to stand by your sibling and side with Jules.

THE ENFORCER: HOLLIS

- Ⓒ **HEARTBEATS:** Dangerous, Passionate, Guilty
- Ⓒ **STATS:** Teeth +2, Heart 0, Guts 0, Feral +1
- Ⓒ **MOVES:** Born in Blood, Cross the Line
- Ⓒ You are the older sibling of Azariah and Jacob. You only joined up with the Klondike Pack because Jacob wanted to give Azariah a better life. Or that's the story. The truth is that you needed out of California... fast. Tell the MC what you are really running from! You support Jules's idea of exploiting your fellow prospectors and making a fortune.

THE GREYPELT: CHARLIE

- ☾ **HEARTBEATS:** Scarred, Wise, Parental
- ☾ **STATS:** Teeth +1, Heart +1, Guts -1, Feral +2
- ☾ **MOVES:** Wise Counsel, I Remember When You Were Knee High
- ☾ Royal is your child. You're bankrolling this trip. That suggests you have money... but not so much that Klondike gold isn't still enticing. However, you're richer than you let on, and this trip is about more than adding to your fortune. Tell the MC what this trip really means to you. You support your child's vision of wealth and a colony, but Clara's vision of an all-werewolf utopia in the wild is very compelling.
- ☾ You are close to another Packmate, Jules, but you can't shake the feeling that they only care about your money.

THE HOWL: Yael

- ☾ Heartbeats: Secretive, Enigmatic, Doubting
- ☾ Stats: Teeth +1, Heart +2, Guts 0, Feral 0
- ☾ Moves: Speak with the Dead, Speak with the Pack
- ☾ You made your living guiding people to California. You are the wilderness expert here, and everyone is relying on you: but it only takes a few days in wilds of Alaska to know this is beyond anything you've encountered. You support Clara's idea of a werewolf utopia, separate from humans.



PACK PLAYBOOK

CULTURE

- Ⓒ [Empty slot]
- Ⓒ Eating humans is taboo
- Ⓒ No lone wolves – everyone acts together
- Ⓒ Run and hunt together as wolves

SLANG

- Ⓒ Loners – Wolves without pack, objects of derision and pity.
- Ⓒ The Change – turning into wolf form.
- Ⓒ The Beast – when you lose control and go completely feral.
- Ⓒ Cub – either a young werewolf or the bitten child of a werewolf.

TRADITIONS

- Ⓒ New werewolves can only be created with the permission of the Alpha.
- Ⓒ Humans must never know about Werewolves, those who find out are killed.
- Ⓒ No calling attention to themselves in any way, given the close proximity of humans.

OTHER IMPORTANT PEOPLE

The other significant Pack members each represent a path the Klondike werewolves can follow. These three will be pushing their agendas as the trip progresses.

RILEY Made a small fortune in the California Gold Rush, only to have his former Alpha confiscate it. Has the knowledge needed to find success in the Klondike. Believes in Gilbert's vision of making enough money to start a new colony.

JULES A con artist who realizes that the true goldmine here is in the people. They're desperate and gullible – legendary con artist Soapy Smith made his "Klondike Gold" selling telegraph messages from Skagway... which didn't have telegraph lines until after the gold rush ended. Wants the Pack to make their fortune that way. In love with Charlie, who is convinced Jules is only after the money.

CLARA Gilbert's sister. While her brother wanted to make enough money to start a new colony near an established settlement, she sees the Yukon wilderness as the true opportunity here. Believes their wolf selves could adapt to this harsh environment, teeming with game and natural resources. She envisions a werewolf utopia in the wild.



SOME HUMANS

No named humans are required for this scenario. It will be up to the MC to decide whether to add them or leave them as general side players.

Some historical notes below.

WOMEN Prostitutes and actresses weren't the only women on the Klondike trail. They were spouses of prospectors, prospectors themselves, entrepreneurs, journalists, and doctors. The "wild west" aspects of the gold rush allowed them to take on jobs they otherwise couldn't.

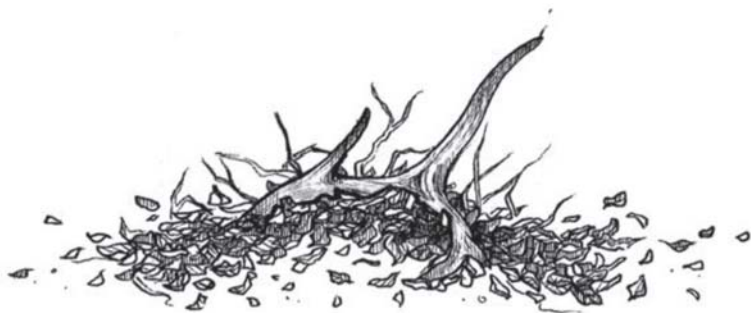
NATIVE AMERICANS/CANADIANS Forget the "cowboys and Indians" stereotypes of the Old West. Native Americans were not raiding prospector camps. When they interacted with the prospectors, they were tradespeople, guides, and labourers. Prejudice and racism still abounded, though. The two people who first discovered Klondike gold were George Cormack and his Tagish First Nation brother-in-law Keish ("Skookum Jim"). Cormack took sole credit and claimed the mine site, saying that Native Canadians couldn't lay mining claims, which was incorrect.

THREATS AND UNTENABLE SITUATIONS

- Ⓒ The environment is always a threat. While werewolves are better equipped to handle the wild, this is a different kind of wilderness. It is harsh and unforgiving.
- Ⓒ The Klondike prospectors travelled in a long line, trudging over the landscape. This is not ideal for werewolves – with tempers frayed and food short, they could begin seeing dinner on two legs. Blazing their own trail would be next to impossible through the thick forest and treacherous mountains.
- Ⓒ There is a ticking clock re: gold. Prospectors from Alaska and the Yukon arrived long before those from California, and good sites are being snatched up fast.
- Ⓒ Charlie holds the purse strings. Everyone else used up their savings buying the steamer ticket.
- Ⓒ If the Pack chooses not to brave the Golden Stairs again, they abandon half their supplies.
- Ⓒ The Pack never had time to fully coalesce before Gilbert got them on that steamer. They're still getting to know each other.
- Ⓒ Gilbert assembled a group of outcasts. Some had been cast out for presumed weakness... others had been cast out for crimes. Royal wanted to be more careful researching backgrounds, but Gilbert believed everyone deserves a chance.



- Ⓒ No one (except possibly Charlie) sees Royal as a potential Alpha, despite the fact they've been doing the work the entire time. Gilbert was a charismatic leader while Royal did the heavy lifting behind the scenes.
- Ⓒ No one has forgotten what happened to Jacob. His death and how it was handled is regularly brought up, as a symbolic excuse – and outlet – for tensions and frustrations arising from the overall situation.
- Ⓒ Winter is coming. No, seriously... winter is coming!



TENSE RELATIONSHIPS

[Blank for MC Notes]



BROWNIE BITES

A *Bite Marks* scenario for 4–5 players by Whitney M. Delaglio

Content warning: drug use

Setting: The Lunari is a Pack that, over the generations, has learned to resist giving into the wolf unless the need is dire. They take their wolf-form seriously, and refrain from using it for petty squabbles. This is a necessary survival skill, since they reside in a small beach town; with a high chance of human encounters, and little more than the sandy beaches for a hunting ground.

Bronco, the current Alpha, is grooming his sister Cassidy to replace him. He wants to retire, dote on his mate, and sire some pups. While the rest of the Pack still think of Cassidy as their baby sister, they've been giving her the space to solve personal problems on her own. Now that she is next in line to take over as Alpha, she must learn that problems are resolved by the Pack.

The businesses in town all depend on the Pack for protection; especially the local bakery, Cannabis Confections, which is operated by Cassidy's mate and high-school sweetheart, Bubblegum. This is a source of tension, since the business is owned by a rival Pack (Dolce) – who apparently don't have time to look out for their own assets. The Lunari guard the crops for the bakery and the bakery itself.

Bronco is the Pack's main connection to the businesses in town. The Lunari will need to make sure they continue to pay for protection once he is gone; but how can they be convinced that Cassidy's got what it takes? Can she protect her Pack, and their human allies?

MC NOTES

By the end of the session, Cassidy should decide if she is ready to discard her Playbook and become the Alpha. If she is, then Cassidy will use the "Make A Challenge Move" but if she rolls 0–6 it counts as a 7–9 result and if she rolls 7–9 it counts as a 10+. (A 10+ roll is as normal.) This Move will test Cassidy to see if she's ready to lead the Pack. Other player characters can also try and take over the Pack before (or after) Cassidy if they wish to do so. However, the scenario is not supposed to be about Cassidy being the protagonist and everyone else being an NPC in her story. The PCs are all equally important: and as MC, you need to make sure that comes out.

If the Alpha role is already filled when Cassidy decides she is ready, then she must use the Make a Challenge Move as normal without the bonuses above.

This is a game about violence, and sometimes going out of control: but this scenario also explores the wolves soothing their primal instincts. These three themes should be explored together but should also be used to brew tension during untenable situations. As MC you should think



about somebody you know that is agreeable, calm, or easygoing; then think about what they are like when they get angry, as compared to someone who's testy on a regular basis.

The Skins for this scenario each have a new Packmates Question.

SCENARIO QUESTION

Does the pup of the Pack have what it takes to become the new Alpha?

SKINS

THE CUB: CASSIDY

- Ⓒ **HEARTBEATS:** Angry, Playful, Relentless
- Ⓒ **STATS:** Teeth +1, Heart +2, Guts 0, Feral 0
- Ⓒ **MOVES:** Overprotected, Heartstrings
- Ⓒ You solve most of your problems with a headbutt to the face. You still struggle with keeping the wolf in check. You are madly in love with your girlfriend, Bubblegum.
- Ⓒ **NEW PACKMATE QUESTION** (use this instead of the one on the Skin): You fucked up big time, and a Packmate helped you deal with the aftermath. How did they help you out? They take a +1 Tie on you.
- Ⓒ **EXTRA MC QUESTION:** How did Cassidy and Bubblegum meet, back in high school?

THE ENFORCER: BUBBLEGUM

- ☾ **HEARTBEATS:** Dangerous, Irresistible, Passionate
- ☾ **STATS:** Teeth +2, Heart +0, Guts -1, Feral +2
- ☾ **MOVES:** Borrow Trouble, Lone Wolf
- ☾ You are the face of Cannabis Confections. Your sweet disposition and puffy pink hair earned you your pet name, but you'd kill for Cassidy, literally.
- ☾ **NEW PACKMATE QUESTION** (use this instead of the one on the Skin): You were not always part of this Pack. You used to belong to Dolce. Why did you leave, and which Packmate knows why? They take a +1 Tie on you.
- ☾ **EXTRA MC QUESTION:** Why did Bubblegum fall in love with Cassidy, a cub from a rival Pack?

THE FIXER: FANG

- ☾ **HEARTBEATS:** Charming, Responsible, Torn
- ☾ **STATS:** Teeth +0, Heart +1, Guts +2, Feral +0
- ☾ **MOVES:** Resources, Sniff it Out
- ☾ You tend to backseat drive, but you mean well. If you had your way, you'd use your bark more than your bite. You volunteer regularly at the animal shelter – Wet Noses.
- ☾ **NEW PACKMATE QUESTION** (use this instead of the one on the Skin): You told a Packmate you don't believe in Cassidy. Why not, and how do they hold that over you? They take a +1 Tie on you.
- ☾ **EXTRA MC QUESTION:** What upsetting things about the Pack does Fang tell to the animals at the shelter?

THE MOON: CROW

[This is a special skin for this scenario.]

- Ⓒ **HEARTBEAT:** Meditative, Pleasant, Wingmate
- Ⓒ **STATS:** Teeth 0, Heart +1, Guts 0, Feral +2
- Ⓒ There are others of your kind that say you forgot the scent of blood. The scent of lust. The scent of dominance. The scent of everything that makes the wolf hunger. They are wrong about you. You've learned that satisfying the wolf in small ways means that, instead of one controlling the other, you and the wolf howl in harmony. You take your primal instincts seriously, and you've taught the Pack how to do the same.
- Ⓒ **MC NOTE:** the NPC Zach is in love with Crow.
- Ⓒ **PACKMATE QUESTION:** You lost control of the Wolf, and a Packmate had to stop you. What harm did they take preventing your mistake, and what terrible thing did they prevent? They take a +1 Tie on you.

MOVES

- Ⓒ **BELLY RUBS:** The Pack trusts you since they know you won't belittle how they feel. When you use the move Provoke the Spill, roll with Feral instead of Heart.
- Ⓒ **TEAR YOU APART:** You breathe deeply before going in for the kill. If you roll a **0–6** using the move Mauling, treat it as a **7–9** result, if you get a **7–9**, treat it as a **10+**, if you roll a **10+** treat it as normal. However, every time you make the Mauling move gain –1 forward to be applied to your next use of Give in to the Wolf. You may gain multiple –1 forwards using this Move up to a maximum of –3.

MOON SEX MOVE

If you and another Player Character have sex, you want to prove to them you are still a wolf at heart. Take +1 forward when you make the move Act on Instinct if using it to impress them.

MC SHOULD ASK FANG OR MAKØ

How has Crow taught you how to harmonize with the wolf within?



THE TIDE: MAKU

[This is a special skin for this scenario.]

- ⌋ **HEARTBEAT:** Alluring, Cutthroat, Steadfast
- ⌋ **STATS:** Teeth +1, Heart +1, Guts 0, Feral +1
- ⌋ There were wolves of old that worshipped the moon's reflection in the sea. Some say they were the result of werewolves mating with sirens long ago. Their kin can still hear the howls of the elders, as distant waves crash against the shore. You are one of these descendants. Wherever you go, the salty sea air knows where to find you. When you howl with watery reflection of your true self at your feet, the reflection howls back.
- ⌋ **MC NOTE:** the NPC Rusty is suspicious of Mako.
- ⌋ **PACKMATE QUESTION:** You made a vow you would never use your sea song against a Packmate, and you didn't; but it cost the Pack. Who was hurt as a result? They take +1 Tie on you.

MOVES

- ⌋ **SEA SONG:** Due to your mysterious undersea heritage, your howl is hypnotic. When you are trying to mitigate a living threat towards you or someone else by singing to them, roll Heart.
Note: You may only use this Move on NPCs who are actively intending to do harm to someone. It cannot be used to subdue an NPC so they can't fight back or similar.
10+ The living threat has been mitigated, and they no longer wish you or anyone else harm. Choose two questions from Harness the Wolf and proceed accordingly.

7–9 The threat has been mitigated temporarily, but once the effect of your song has ended they will focus all their attention on you.

0–6 The MC makes a Hard Move.

- ☾ **PLACOID SCALES:** You have tough scales underneath your fur coat. +1 Armor when you use your endurance to win a fight.

TIDE SEX MOVE

If you and another Player Character have sex, you howl a song just for them. If it makes them feel loved, they heal +1 Harm. If it makes them feel overwhelmed, they gain the temporary heartbeat 'aroused' until the next time they have sex.

MC SHOULD ASK CROW OR FANG

What does Mako see in their reflection? What do you see in yours?





OTHER IMPORTANT PEOPLE

BRONCO The Alpha of the Lunari Pack is done with being in charge and wants to step down. He was given his pet name ironically since he has the patience of a saint. Why did he choose Cassidy?

GANACHE Alpha of the neighboring Dolce Pack and mother of Bubblegum. Why is her daughter still involved in the family business when she is no longer part of the Pack, and why did Lunari agree to doing business with a rival Pack?

RUSTY the Howl of the Dolce: Has had it in for Crow since he got the Dolce banned from Cephalopod. Rusty also spoke to a body that washed up, and it told them to be wary of Mako. Why?

SOME HUMANS

PAULA A regular at the bakery, and owner of the local animal shelter, Wet Noses. Fang is her favorite volunteer, and she finds it endearing that Fang confides in the animals. What secret of the Pack did she overhear?

ZACH A flair bartender and owner of the beachside lounge, Cephalopod. He gets discounted protection from the Pack since he did them a favor. He also has a huge crush on Crow. MC to ask the players – what favor did he do them?

PACK PLAYBOOK

CULTURE

- ⌋ [Empty Slot]
- ⌋ The buddy system is taken seriously on the job.
- ⌋ The pack that gets baked together stays calm together.

SLANG

- ⌋ Melting: Willingly shifting into a werewolf.
- ⌋ Puddle: Time set aside just for cuddling.
- ⌋ Undertowed: One hypnotized by howl song.
- ⌋ Waning: When a Werewolf can calm down.
- ⌋ Waxing: When a Werewolf loses control.

TRADITIONS

- ⌋ The Pack cannot hunt pets or strays.
- ⌋ Until the next Alpha has been chosen, no new Werewolves.
- ⌋ You cannot let humans know you are a Werewolf.



THREATS AND UNTENABLE SITUATIONS:

- Ⓒ Two Packs One Beach: Those who prey on protected businesses tend to disappear at the hands of the Lunari. Until recently this was passed off with superstitious rumors and urban legends. That is, until the Dolce outed the Lunari as the Werewolves responsible. They obviously know that exposing the other Pack could threaten their own, but it's worth it if it means driving the Lunari and their human allies out of town. What lengths will the Dolce go to, to get rid of the Lunari; and why have they suddenly turned on their former allies?
- Ⓒ Everybody Knows Everybody: Now that everyone knows about the werewolves, the Dolce are intent on stirring things up more and more. Ganache told everyone that Cassidy turned her poor daughter, Bubblegum into a wolf and is looking to do the same to others. How will the townsfolk react? With fear and violence, or betrayal and heartbreak?



TENSE RELATIONSHIPS

[Blank for MC Notes]





ESSAY: A TASTE OF CONTROL

ESSAY: A TASTE OF CONTROL

By Kate Bullock

Werewolves have existed in the heart of our myths and fantasies for centuries. We have poured ourselves into them, creating our own metaphors as their stories grew and changed with us. From clear parallels in dealing with primal and animalistic instincts, to the obvious metaphor of puberty and self-control (thanks, *Ginger Snaps*¹), the werewolf has long been one of the strongest metaphors for authority and domination, both internally and externally.

Wolves, likewise, occupy a special place within our hearts and run rampant in our imagination. We impose human social hierarchies on them and, in turn, pretend those hierarchies are normal and reflect them back on ourselves.²

Despite these notions being wrong, we still cling to the idea of an Alpha wolf, and not just in canine culture, but also in human culture. This leads us down a strange cyclical rabbit hole of humans believing in an Alpha figure, prominently seen in our sociological history, to stating that there are Alpha male wolves. We then take this Alpha male wolf and use him as both a template and a metaphor for the behaviour of men (both human and were) in werewolf fiction.

¹*Gingersnaps* directed by John Fawcett: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0210070/>

²Why everything you know about wolf packs is wrong: <https://io9.gizmodo.com/why-everything-you-know-about-wolf-packs-is-wrong-502754629>

What is the Alpha though? In a world where we know there is no Alpha wolf, why does the myth of the Alpha male still persist? And why do we still infuse this belief in our werewolf myths? Does the Alpha Wolf-man have anything he can teach us, or should we throw him in the sea to be forgotten?

Within the world of werewolves, and within Bite Marks, there is an Alpha, the leader of the pack. How we engage playing the Alpha is going to be influenced by pop culture, our own perceptions of what it means to be the Alpha, and our own experiences with control, responsibility, and being a leader. There are so many fraught, compelling, and interesting ways to engage the Alpha; and just as many for engaging the role of the submissive packmates.

THE TRUTH OF DOMINANCE

In classic werewolf fiction, the dominant wolf would be called the Alpha. The Alpha male stereotype has long played a major role in werewolf fiction. He is ruthless, dangerous, and absolutely in charge. Often he's quick to anger and strong when things go poorly for the pack. He rarely shows emotion other than his somewhat ever-present anger.

When we think of the Alpha male in popular fiction, my favourite example is always Wolverine. Unshakeable confidence, rampant anger, lashing out in frustration, and going for the unattainable love interest. We've seen him as Christian Grey, Dean Winchester, Tyler Durden, and





Tony Stark. Independent and willing to put other people at risk for what he believes is important. Naturally, he's dripping with masculinity. Unfortunately, it's mostly toxic. He's possessive and while he's protective, he's controlling of those he's possessive over. This creates a sense of entitlement to his pack and their bodies, time, and lives. Loyalty becomes code for obedience and obedience is easily abused.

Despite the Alpha wolf myth being disproved, the Alpha Male persists. Bite Marks intersects with this stereotype beautifully, as the role of Alpha brings up the same issues seen in pop culture and in toxic masculinity. The Alpha is in charge of the pack. It's their job to ensure the pack's survival. An eagerness and willingness to control and harm the bodies and wills of those you are chosen to protect is one way of playing an Alpha. However, a more interesting take is that the Alpha is meant to serve the pack and its needs, often to the detriment of their health, safety, and feelings.

Toxic masculinity demands that men be tough, stoic, protective, and logical. It also demands that they swallow any emotions other than anger in order to be seen as manly. The Alpha is often portrayed this way, even if the Alpha isn't a man.

Being the Alpha has become code for masculine behaviour.

“Being the Alpha has become code for masculine behaviour”

In most of our fiction, the Alpha is either angry or silent, despite the fact that Alphas will experience a wider array of emotions because of the turmoil of leadership. If the Alpha shows other emotions, like love or fear, it's seen as a failure or weakness. Having emotions as an Alpha is not weakness, no matter what pop culture has to say about it. Emotions are one of the strongest abilities of an Alpha. To lead a pack, they must be emotionally intelligent and capable of holding space for their vulnerable packmates. An Alpha who demands obedience, and who lashes out in anger when pack members are emotional or disobedient, will lead to a toxic pack of aggressive, violent wolves who self-destruct. Yet pop culture would have us believe that the only way to lead a wolf pack is through aggressive domination through pain, fear, punishment, and violence. The very simple message we get about dominance is that it is earned through hurting others and maintaining fear.

Somehow the message that a pack of wolves is a family unit has disappeared from the narrative. At best, we get a dysfunctional family built around abuse. So we must, as players and as facilitators, be careful that we aren't using *Bite Marks* and other werewolf fiction to emulate abusive relationships without understanding what we're doing. Scott McCall's role as Alpha in *Teen Wolf* is an excellent example of leadership with compassion and self-sacrifice; and is contrasted with other Alphas in *Teen Wolf* who lash out and punish their packs.





Truly leading people, whether it's a community, family unit, or group of friends, requires vast emotional intelligence so they can understand the feelings of others. They make space for fear, questioning, hurt, anger, and doubt. A truly emotionally healthy leader will deal with that by being vulnerable with their own emotions, listening, engaging, and helping the packmate understand their feelings.

In *Bite Marks* Alphas open up to packmates using the Spill move and can use Provoke Spill to encourage packmates to open up in return so they can best protect, guide and help them. Being vulnerable will let their packmates gain trust in them.

This is not the domination we see in popular fiction. But it is a fundamental truth of being an Alpha. Alphas should experience a wide arrange of feelings that allow them to relate to their packmates. Their ability to navigate feelings will help the pack trust them, and when the pack is shown compassion and caring, they will bond with the Alpha and want to do what's best for the pack, which ultimately is what the Alpha wants more than anything.

Having the driving need to keep the pack safe and stable steers the Alpha and their actions. Dominating through fear or aggression may sometimes be necessary, but by no means should be the default. Being an Alpha, truly, is in part dominating through kindness and love.

Leaders, especially pack Alphas, exist constantly in the struggle to make their communities feel safe. They do this by being confident, capable, and by hiding their own fear. They take the fears and worries of their packs into themselves, giving their pack a chance to breathe and feel safe, while they carry that worry with them forever. This unseen burden is often the heaviest.

THE TRUTH OF SUBMISSION

While werewolf media loves to detail how very awful Alpha Male wolves are, it only sometimes touches on the nature of werewolf packs. There is an assumed truth that all non-Alpha wolves are inherently submissive, but are also aggressive and vying for power against one another to become the next Alpha.

It's entirely possible werewolves have their own inherent instincts to submit to other wolves. We certainly know some people take joy in submitting to (and dominating) other humans. More likely, though, this instinct comes from an evolutionary need to be one with the pack and to promote the harmony of a functioning family unit. If the unit must have a leader, then it is natural that others must yearn to follow.

That being said, the core part of a pack's structure is built upon the needs of its members. If the pack members' needs aren't being met, the pack isn't stable. Part of those needs will be strong leadership to help give direction, purpose, and safety to the pack. Another part will be the





individual needs of each of its members. When those needs aren't being met, the power dynamic will become unstable as pack members try to get their needs met, perhaps by challenging the Alpha or dominating other pack mates.

Submission, truly, is the position of power within a Dominant and Submissive dynamic. The submissive holds the power to say no, to disrupt the dynamic, to end the dynamic, and to draw lines and boundaries on what they are and aren't willing to do. A pack of wolves, each drawing their own boundaries, results in an Alpha who must meet those needs and respect those boundaries to keep the pack cohesive. The Alpha balances everything, whilst the packmates are focused on their individual needs and following the Alpha's orders. In choosing to follow the orders of the Alpha, the submissive gives their power over to the Alpha. In return, the Alpha meets the needs of the submissive member, and the pack as a whole. This exchange is powerful and potent.

A balanced pack has all of those needs met, with often the Alpha being the one whose needs are put aside. An unhealthy pack has:

- Ⓒ needs ignored,
- Ⓒ packmates being bullied or harassed into believing they have different needs, and

“the power dynamic will become unstable as pack members try to get their needs met”

- Ⓒ packmates employing disobedience to meet their needs and being punished for it.

Choosing to submit to the Alpha is an active choice each pack member must make. Each time they obey, it's a choice they've made and they must own that power and those consequences. If the situation has become toxic, the submissive will feel they have to submit out of fear of reprisal. If the situation is healthy, the submissive will be choosing to submit because they truly believe it is the right thing to do.

SUBMISSION AND DOMINATION DYNAMICS

These intense dynamics between the Alpha and their pack lead to fraught territory where domination and submission can be both healthy and toxic at the same time. No situation will be clearly one or the other: although often, when the situation is dangerously toxic, it is much more obvious, despite how insidious abuse can be. These points of tension often create some of the most potent role-playing opportunities filled with drama and fascinating conflict.

Healthy submission and domination is based upon communication, clearly expressed needs and expectations, and consent. When a pack is functioning well, a lot of conversations are happening between packmates, the Alpha, and the pack as a whole. People are being clear about their needs and action is being taken to meet those various needs. The Alpha is confident in leading the pack and the pack supports the



Alpha and their choices because they feel like they are a cohesive unit built on trust.

Within Bite Marks these conversations around consent, needs, and expectations are where role-playing is happening. Opportunities for pack conflict and drama arise out of the Moves in the game and the conversations that the Moves generate. Think of each Move as launching a conversation on how to create (or destroy) pack cohesion.

Unhealthy submission looks like fear, pain, harm, hurt, and sometimes death. When submissive pack members obey out of fear instead of trust, they may lash out, push back, challenge the Alpha or each other to get their needs met. In character this may mean fights, screaming matches, backstabbing, and deliberately manipulating other packmates in order to feel safer or more in control of the situation. When a situation is bad, all of us yearn for control. When the Alpha fails to provide that then the effects will be dramatic.

Just like with people stuck in harmful relationships, submissive packmates may show symptoms of being in an abusive relationship with their Alpha, such as lashing out, conflict avoidance, or fawning over or worshipping the Alpha as a way to appease them. These are toxic behaviours that will cause damage to the packmate's other relationships and to the pack itself.

Unlike humans, domination and submission are said to be intrinsic to werewolf nature. This means both come more naturally and even subconsciously to the werewolves. Perhaps a pack dynamic with an Alpha leader is the best social structure for survival in a hostile world. This is an important aspect players should consider when creating their pack.

But just because nature has determined that wolves inherently seek out and perform these power dynamics doesn't mean they are always going to work perfectly and beautifully. As humans, we seek out emotional relationships but are often ill-equipped for being good participants in those relationships. A pack dynamic is no different. There will be healthy and unhealthy behaviours that the pack must learn to balance and keep in check. The dominance and submission dynamic is part of that and generates amazing stories.



PLAYING WITH DOMINATION AND SUBMISSION

As we sit down to play *Bite Marks*, we're entering into a social contract to engage these parts of the game. The Alpha and their pack are the game. You can't opt out and you can't remove pack dynamics because it is the game. What you can do is set yourself up for the best experience possible.

It's important that your gaming group discusses what domination and submission look like, to them and to their characters. While dominance and submission can bring up some really toxic behaviours, that doesn't mean we shouldn't put these behaviours in the game. Instead, we have a powerful opportunity to consciously engage with the dynamic to explore it in all its facets.

Exploring content like toxic domination and submission allows us to examine the behaviours and explore their impacts on our characters and their packmates. It lets us watch messy stories, engage with media that often celebrates toxicity instead of being critical of it, and allows us to experience a dynamic we might not have engaged in before from a safe distance.

When you choose to engage with the more toxic elements of domination and submission, it's important that you decide which parts you're going to be touching on and getting consent from your fellow players. It's also important to note that you should be engaging in these elements with an

arc of growth in mind. An aggressive, abusive Alpha is only interesting if they learn the folly of their ways and attempt redemption later.

By the same note, an obedient, fearful submissive is only going to be interesting if they break out of that dynamic and strive for something healthier. Or do they, as many trauma victims do, emulate the behaviours they experienced and in turn become what they hated?

There's also great power in subverting these stereotypes with the encouragement and support of the MC. An Alpha who leads with love and compassion can be called weak, but can they prove that it isn't a flaw? Will they give in to social pressure to be awful to their pack? A submissive who has authority and voice and confidence like the Howl or Greypelt playbooks, but doesn't use it to undermine their Alpha, can be fascinating. What keeps them loyal? How does the Alpha work to earn it?

What domination and submission look like at their best and at their worst will vary from pack to pack. Some important questions to ask are:

- Ⓒ Why does our pack need this dynamic to survive?
- Ⓒ What do we get out of it?
- Ⓒ What is lacking in it?
- Ⓒ What needs are being met by it and what needs aren't being met by it?





These questions can help frame your pack structure and set in motion dynamics and struggles that will flesh out the story and create obvious conflicts for the game. They also allow you to set the tone for your own pack in terms of what parts of toxic submission and domination you're willing to play with and what you aren't willing to engage with. Page 17 gives you more information on safety culture and safety tools to help you embed these decisions in the game.

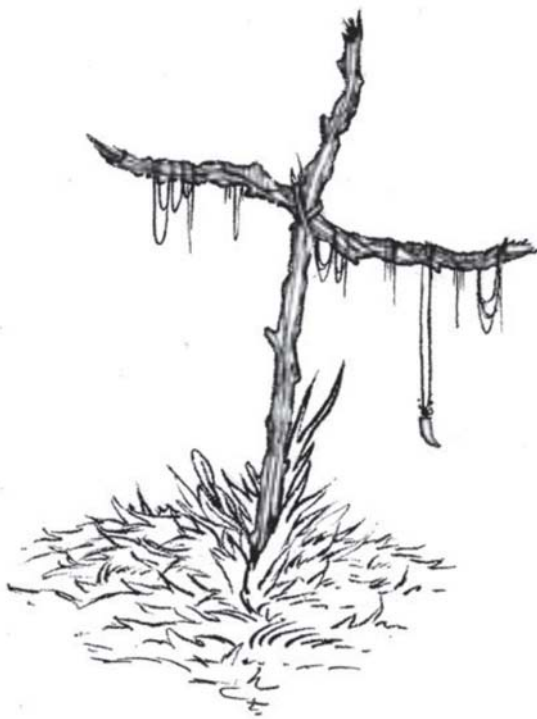
Asking questions will let you decide: how does the Dominant keep their power? Why does each packmate submit? What does submission mean to each packmate and to the Dominant themselves? What does it look like? Are you going to engage toxic tropes to see how family and friends can change them? Or are you going to start healthy and see if it can be maintained? What fine line will you walk in your storytelling?

Bite Marks is a game giving you permission to engage these dynamics consensually and with intention. Explore what it means to you, your character, your Dominant, and your packmates with as much wiliness and wildness as you want, so long as everyone consents. Dive deep into how it feels to be bound as the Alpha to your pack and serve their needs. Lean into being a submissive who yearns for more or desperately needs approval.

These tropes pack a punch. Play safe, play thoughtfully, and always get buy-in before you introduce a hard element like abuse into the pack dynamic. Utilize your character's needs as a starting place for how that

influences their feelings around the pack and the Alpha. If you are the Alpha, what happened to your needs when you took charge? Are they being met or did you push them aside?

Ultimately, *Bite Marks* gives you the opportunity to test the limits of how a family that functions on authority can survive together. These dynamics will build beautifully painful stories for you and your pack. It's time to get your wolf on and brave the depths of the woods as you explore what it means to you to be submissive or dominant or both.



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A game of werewolf pack dynamics

The world is raked with teeth and streaked with blood. Living as a werewolf is a precarious balancing act. Emotions are heightened, love tastes sweeter, anger feels sharper and everyday you walk barefoot through streets of broken glass. You are raw and alive. You are Pack.

But if the Pack cannot hold together then all will come to ruin.

The Enforcer knows better than anyone that violence has consequences; the Cub wants a family to love them and the Prodigal just wants to come home and rest their bruised heart.

Packs can be aggressive and toxic and they can be places of joy, love and safety. They can be all these things and more. What will your pack be?

Bite Marks is a role-playing game for 3–5 players about life in a werewolf pack.

This book gives you:

- Ⓒ Rules for telling stories about being a werewolf pack.
- Ⓒ Seven basic character types covering different social roles in the pack.
- Ⓒ Lots of tools for running the game for your friends including advice on how to make emotions bite!

Your pack needs you. The only question is... what are you going to do about it?



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