

KINFOLK

UNSUNG HEROES



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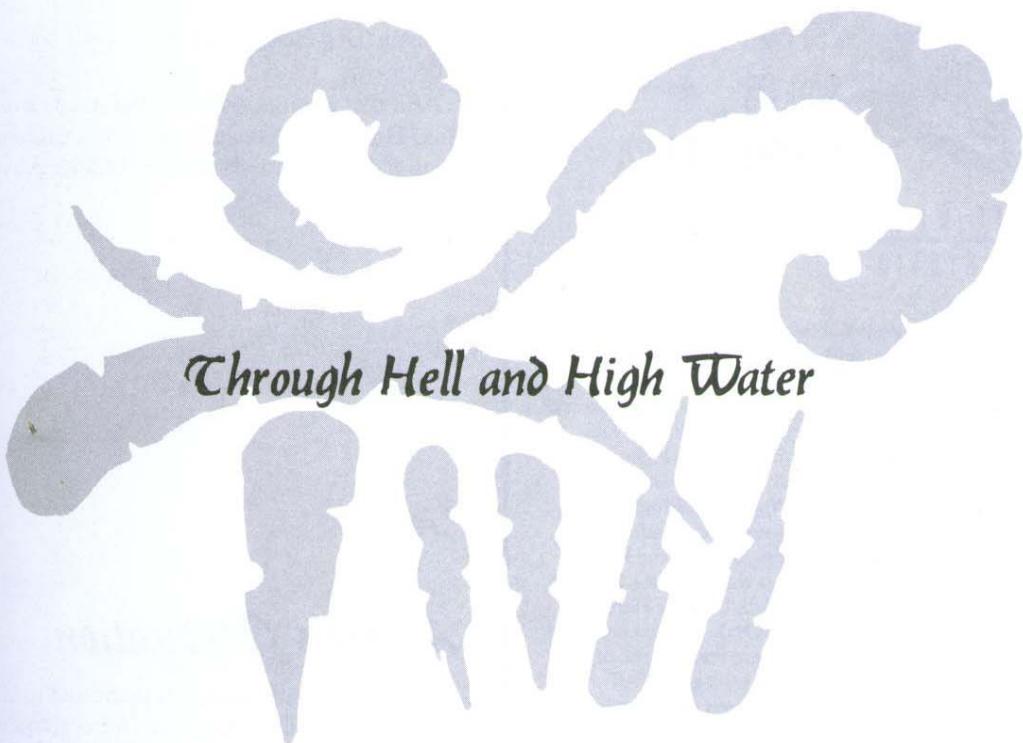


A Sourcebook for Werewolf: The Apocalypse

KINFOLK

tm

UNSUNG HEROES



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Check out White Wolf online at

<http://www.white-wolf.com>; <alt.games.whitetwolf> and <rec.games.frp.storyteller>

PRINTED IN THE USA.

Special Thanks

Mike "Bee Pooka" Tinney, for bagging that sweet, sweet arcade-size honey.

Chris "Exploding Boat" McDonough, for actually going to see both of 'em.

Aileen "But We Have the Same Birthday" Miles, for getting the gooby shirt.

Brian "GenCon Makes My Eye Bleed" Glass, for not kidding.

Ed "Delta Force" Hall, for letting us know how *real* mercenaries get things done.

Richard "Ryder" Dansky, for wearing the yellow bucket.

Ken "Centurion Nova Prime" Cliffe, for defending Xandar at all costs.

Ethan "D'oh! D'oh! D'oh!" Skemp, for the nuclear power plant approach to rulebook development.

Kathleen "Read the Damn Thing, It's Free!" Ryan, for making sure her story got told.

Justin "Dog-Head Yoda Goat" Achilli, for... well, enough said.

And two way-out-of-house thank-you's to Rob "Dice-Man" Hurriaga, for being born under a randomly generated phase of the moon, and to Ralph "Dead or Alive" Bruce, for his high-caliber insights.

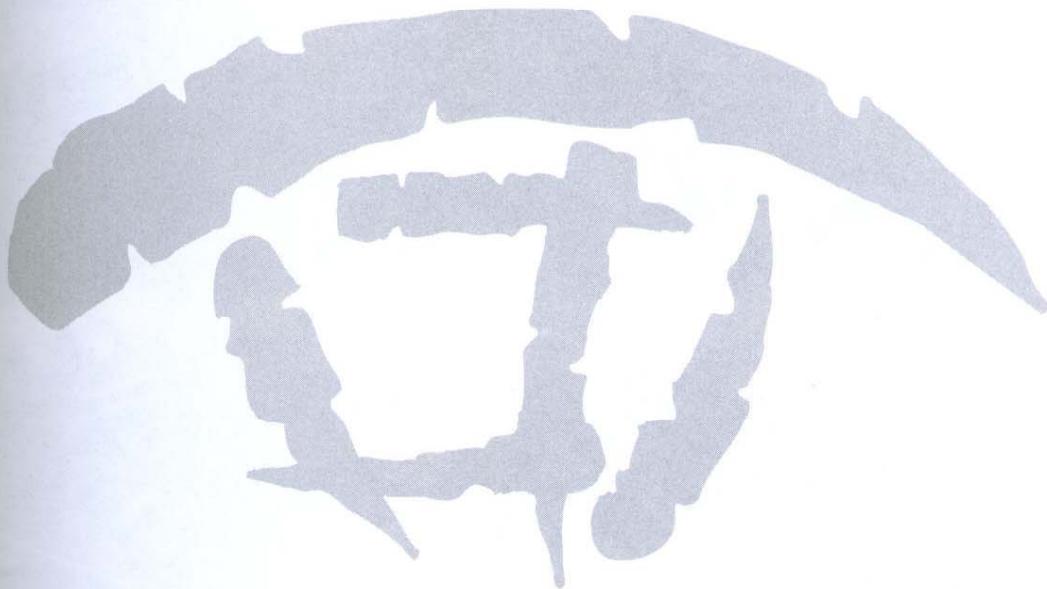
Author's Dedication

This book is affectionately dedicated to the Kin of my flesh, heart and spirit: D.C. McKinney, Jessica Hanna RN, Forrest Buck Marchinton and Wayne "The Bastard" Peacock.

Extra deluxe thanks to Phil, Ethan, Stewart, Jackie and Nicky, for first and second chances and a lot of wisdom along the way.

KINFOLKTM

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Contents

<i>Legends of the Garou: Kagemusha</i>	4
<i>Introduction</i>	10
<i>Chapter One: The Society of Kinfolk</i>	16
<i>Chapter Two: Creating Characters</i>	46
<i>Chapter Three: Supernatural Kinfolk</i>	64
<i>Chapter Four: Storytelling</i>	72
<i>Appendix: Blood Relations</i>	96

Contents



Mark French 1997

Legends of the Garou: Kagemusha

Sipping hot tea, feeling warmth restored to his frozen body, Musaki Takeshi waited patiently for the summons from his father, Musaki Kazuo. Takeshi felt weary after his hurry from the field of battle. Drying flakes of blood and brains still spattered his armor. Takeshi was *jito*, a land steward, in service to his elderly father. Long had Musaki Kazuo been trusted *hatamoto* to the Minamoto shogun. Takeshi, like his father, was a man of duty. Since his 16th year, the samurai had worn the *dai-sho* in service to the clan of Minamoto. Duty meant guarding the lands of the shogun against injustice and corruption. He took simple pleasure from the gardens of his estate, in the beauty of his lady, Azami, and from their two small sons. More than once, Azami's cool presence had stilled the fires raging within him. For, also like his father, Takeshi proudly carried blood of the Hakken, wolf-warriors of the great moon-god Tsuki-

yomi. Since the time of his ancestor Akemi, in the Heiji War, Clan Musaki's sons, the furies burning within their flesh, swept aside lesser men. Azami shared distantly in the Hakken ancestry, and Takeshi felt certain at least one of their sons would savor the icy light of Tsuki-yomi in his heart.

A young servant slid back the rice paper screen and bowed to Takeshi. "Your father summons you, my lord." The samurai followed the boy through the maze of rooms until they reached the resting chambers of Kazuo. The white-haired man, still dressed in his court robes, lay on a thick futon. Fine indigo cloth covered his chilled body. Takeshi gasped at the stench in the room; even the scented fire in the room's small brazier could not stifle the rot of death. Kazuo's pain-filled eyes looked with love and hope at his son.



"Do not fear to see what is soon to pass," said the old man. "I am called to lands in the heart of Tsuki-yomi, to the floating worlds beyond this one."

"My lord father, who has done this to you?" cried Takeshi.

Kazuo coughed up phlegm speckled with dark blood. "Do not make my mistake and underestimate the forces of our Ashikaga enemies, my son. Among them must be workers of dark magic who can infect our people with pestilence. They seek to end my influence with our lord, the shogun; they will search you out as well."

"You shall be avenged, my lord. I am of Tsuki-yomi's full face—I know little of healing, songs, spirits or laws. But my sword will answer their treachery!" A sob was in Takeshi's voice. The warrior clenched his fists as he felt the familiar rage swelling within him, and he choked it back with all his strength. To unleash the wolf in this place, to disturb his father's last moments with dishonor, was unthinkable.

The old man smiled weakly. "You have been a good son to me, and a brave warrior of our line. Now, I ask that you undertake one last duty." His talonlike hand rang a small gong next to the futon. Only a moment later, a cloaked young man entered the room. Takeshi stared in shock as the man took off his hood, for the Hakken warrior was gazing at his mirror image. Kazuo managed a chuckle.

"My sons, for the first time you meet. Musaki Takeshi, this is your twin, Musaki Jiro, born but a few moments after

your eyes first beheld the warmth of Amaterasu's light. He has not the rages of the Hakken, but he is your brother nonetheless. He is also *kagemusha*, the shadow warrior, the one who can stand for you when you cannot stand. The time fast approaches when he will serve this clan with his life and soul."

Twin saw twin, and Hakken saw Kin. A bond took shape between the brothers like a strong bridge over a raging river. A thousand questions touched both their minds, but the brothers bowed deeply to each other before they knelt once more before their father. Questions could wait; obedience and respect could not.

Kazuo cleared his throat. "Listen carefully, my sons. My sources have heard among Ashikaga Takaugi's retainers that there is plotting in that clan against our shogun and against our house as well. You two must return to our clan's estate. Jiro, you must learn from Takeshi. Follow his movements. Copy his manners. For a time comes when he must leave our lands and abide with our allies in the north. You, Jiro, must take his place. Prepare to defeat the forces of the Ashikaga or die with honor."

"Father, you ask me to leave our lands in time of danger?" exclaimed Takeshi. "Perform an act of cowardice? I could no more leave our home in the face of attack than I could dishonor our lord, the shogun! What you ask is shameful for a samurai and doubly so for one of the Hakken!" He turned away in disgust.

Lord Kazuo mustered the last of his strength and propped up on one elbow. His eyes blazed and his voice echoed his might. "Listen to me, my son. You are the last Hakken of Clan Musaki. Your blood must be preserved! Perhaps your sons carry Tsuki-yomi's blessings, but we may not know this for many years to come. I will not die and leave none of my blood behind! This is a matter not of personal honor, but of the honor and lineage of the clan. You must live to lead the Hakken in my stead! If you do not, I will find a way to curse you from beyond the grave, this I swear!" He caught his breath. "Jiro has lived his entire life for this mission. For him, there is no greater honor than to be *kagemusha*. If you cannot abide by my last wish, I have judged you badly, and you are surely no son of mine." Exhausted, he fell back upon the futon.

"Jiro, my brother, is this your wish too?" asked Takeshi in a dull voice.

The *kagemusha*'s face blazed with an inner passion that took the Hakken warrior aback. "My lord Takeshi, what other purpose and greater honor could I possibly live for? You are Hakken, and I am *kagemusha*. My karma demands I serve you in this. But moreover, no other happiness could I find in this life than to know I have helped preserve the line of Musaki's Hakken."

Finally, Takeshi nodded. "So it will be. My dear father, I shall take Jiro with me. He shall become me and know my ways. And when fate wills it, he will take my seat at our estates while I seek our allies and preserve the clan."

"Then I can die in peace," whispered Kazuo. "Now, I ask that you attend me in my last moments, my sons. Death not in battle is ugly and weak. This is as close to the fray as I may now come." He sat up slowly and pulled from his sleeve a small scroll. Kazuo read the poem he had written there, as is fitting for samurai before their deaths:

Ice shadows leaf veins,
Sparkling shards of dark and white.
Cold takes life away.

"Jiro, I ask you take my *katana* and perform the *kaishaku*. Yet when the deed is done, the sword goes to your elder brother, for it is the weapon of my father and my father's father. My *wakasashi* I shall use for the *seppuku*."

Takeshi watched as his father, silent to the end, slowly performed the ritual of *seppuku*, the aged entrails slowly spilling onto his silken lap as the old man made two precise incisions with the *wakasashi*. Takeshi did not release his breath until after a barely perceptible nod from his father signaled Jiro to let the ancient *katana* fall. The younger twin carefully cleaned the blade before presenting it to his older brother.

A waiting Shinto priest began attending to the body while the twins bowed and left the room. Their father's last command drove their haste. Not a word did they say until they were out of the shogun's palace, mounted on sturdy ponies, bound for the clan estate.

"Our father was a great man. You were his pride and joy," said Jiro humbly.

Takeshi rode a while in silence. "I never knew I had a brother," he said finally. "What would you learn from me to be *kagemusha*?"

"Why, the things you touch, your manners, the skills of command. Already I know you have a beautiful lady and two sons. I have heard all your heroic deeds from our father. But how little I know you as a man. I want to see you as you speak and love, in your famous gardens, in *cha-do* and in the baths. While I may know the tale of your days, I cannot live your life until I see you living it. This is why our father deemed I must join you in your home."

Takeshi said little else, for his heart was heavy, not just with thoughts of his father but also for Jiro. Within the day, they arrived at the Musaki estates. There, Azami welcomed Jiro as family, and before long, he delighted in her kindness and the joy of that house. The children played games with him every day, and he taught them songs of the court and the playing of the flute. Despite his reservations and fear of what was to come, Takeshi came to treasure those weeks with Jiro. Apart from Azami, he had refused any close companions; few could bear the sight of him in the rages that all too frequently took control of his mind and body. For Jiro, it was a time of learning, but for Takeshi, it was a time of respite when he hunted, gardened, painted and found a new friend in his unknown brother.

Takeshi treated Jiro carefully, even in their daily *kendo* duels. Well aware of his greater strength, the Hakken hesitated to push his brother. But on the third morning, he reeled in surprise as Jiro struck a stinging blow to his head. Takeshi felt pain, and though it passed in a moment, blood filled his eyes. His limbs grew and swelled, and, in an instant, he was a mass of fur and rage towering over Jiro. The *kagemusha*'s eyes narrowed, and he held his ground against the furious beast that was his twin.

"So, my weaker blows truly sting? How could they not, brother? For all that I do not have the powers of the Hakken, I am still samurai, still a warrior. Do not make the mistake of thinking me helpless. Perhaps I shall die in the upcoming battle, but doubt not that many of the Ashikaga will fall at my feet. Now, still your anger! Fight me as you would any warrior. You do me no honor and teach me nothing new by your soft blows!" Takeshi's blood pounded but a moment more before he stood again eye-to-eye with Jiro. From that day forward, their battles were fierce tests of will, with *kagemusha* victorious as often as Hakken.

Time passed, and the seasons changed. Cherry blossoms filled the land with a sweet fragrance, their petals carpeting the green grass. In nearly all things, Jiro learned to be his brother's equal, even if he never could possess the gifts of Tsuki-yomi. But his other failing, to his own mind, was in the performing of *cha-do*, the tea ceremony. No matter how much he practiced, his movements never could quite match Takeshi's. One late spring evening, Takeshi per-



formed the beautiful ceremony and was surprised when Jiro seemed simply to enjoy himself and not act downcast at his lack of skill. When the ceremony was over, Takeshi questioned his twin. Jiro smiled sadly.

"I fear that my hands were not meant to wield brush and bowl as perfectly as yours, my brother. I must accept this, as I have accepted my fate as *kagemusha* and one who has not the spirit of the Hakken. But lack of skill is perhaps harder to bear than heavy duty." Takeshi had no words of comfort, but never again did he have the heart to perform *cha-do* without mourning Jiro.

The very next morning, messengers brought word that a large force of Ashikaga troops were within a day's march. Karma suddenly intruded into the pleasant days, and Takeshi knew that Jiro's life counted in the price for the peace they had enjoyed. Jiro immediately urged Takeshi to flee.

"We both know it is not cowardice holding you from battle. It takes more bravery to follow the dictates of duty than the bond of a sword. You are the more courageous for living, for enduring to further serve our liege lord. I shall take refuge in the halls of our ancestors while yours shall be the harder road. Perhaps my deeds will allow me to one day greet you as *Hakken* myself instead of *kagemusha*. But quickly now! Take Azami and flee to the place our father and his allies have prepared for you. When the scavengers have departed, return and dispose of those left behind. But not before! Do not fail in your duty to Lord Minamoto, as I will not fail in my duty to you, brother." Jiro turned away, donning Takeshi's robe stitched with the *mon* of Clan Musaki. He would stand against the approaching Ashikaga in the battle as Musaki Takeshi, as *kagemusha*, while the real Takeshi fled to safety.

Azami needed no urging. Quickly she prepared the children and a handful of servants. They mounted horses and prepared to leave while Takeshi hesitated. "I cannot leave Jiro," he cried to her at the estate's rear gates. "He is of our clan, my twin! What kind of warrior leaves his family behind? What kind of Hakken would I be to flee from battle?" His body swelled in anger. Glossy fur dark as night sprang forth on his arms and head.

Azami's slender arms strained to hold him, urgent as her whispers. "No, my lord, no! Jiro goes to his death, and you cannot follow. What were the last words of your noble father? Recall them now, and be silent lest you betray us all! Did you long for a brother to share your friendship? No less did Jiro long for you in his lonely exile. You cannot save him, for truly, his life ended at birth when the priestess saw you were Hakken and he was not. Let him go, my lord. Let him fulfill Tsuki-yomi's bidding as you must live your own destiny. Do not let his death be in vain."

The pounding of his heart slowed. The rage in his soul abated as he listened to Azami's words. But utter grief replaced it. Without a glance back, he, Azami, the children and the servants spurred their horses northward, even as the sounds of battle began behind them. Hours later, as the setting sun painted the skies deep orange, he saw in his mind the ruined courtyard of his home and the glittering blade that fell to end Jiro's life. He smelled the fresh scent of blood from his brother's body. And Musaki Takeshi, samurai and Hakken, wept as he heard the triumphant shouts of his enemies, who little knew how the sacred bonds of duty had spoiled their victory.





Introduction: The Kinfolk's Tale

*Listen here, my sister and my brother,
What would you care if you lost the other?
— R.E.M., "Sweetness Follows"*

Prelude

I'm 20 years old. For more than half those years, I've knelt every day, repeating the prayers I've known all my life, wanting meaning, waiting for miracles, longing for either redemption or a single chance to prove my worth.

Most of the time I'm kneeling, it's because of my brother, Ian. He's the talent of the family, not me. I've been here struggling for hours trying to write something down, and if I went and asked him to help, I bet he'd finish off these ramblings with brilliant prose in at least two languages. Ian's also the family beauty, dispelling the notion that the powers that be dole out looks and smarts in fair proportions. Ian has this thick mane of auburn hair that people like to paw through. Me, I got this frizzy, red crap that's a real pain. I usually have to wear it off my face, especially when I'm working.

But back to Ian. I usually end up on my knees praying for Ian because he has this *knack* for finding trouble. I want somebody to stop him from getting into such messes. I want him to be kept safe. But it's my doom to stand, one day, still alive, heart pounding in my chest, over a grave of rough stones piled in ways humans have forgotten, and hear songs sung for him in

a tongue I can't comprehend by mourners I can't see. Ian won't let me save him, either. My penance is to endure here while he passes on to a place I'll never know. I'm likely to see old age and grandchildren, while Ian's chances for seeing his fourth decade seem slimmer every day. He was born of the spirit of Gaia; he embodies her essence in his blood, and her soul is his. That wild part of him, the part I can't know, is Garou — balanced between the world of humans and the world of the wolf. He lives in both places. Me, I'm stuck here with all the regular types. Well, mostly regular.

When I was pretty young, Ian, me and our folks were in a bad car wreck. I came to, I remember, from a nightmare about being chased, afraid of being all alone in the damp, cold dark. But I wasn't. It sounds weird, and maybe I was still asleep, but there beside me, not far from the burning car, was a black wolf with a silver streak down her face. She was there next to me the rest of the night, talking to me, not with words but with dreamsongs that echoed in my mind, songs about the werewolves and their Kinfolk. Ian was a Garou, she told me, a werewolf. I was Kinfolk, related by blood. The black wolf told



me I was a gift from Gaia and that my life would be among Kinfolk who could show me my own path. But she also told me never to forget that I share in the Garou heritage and that I have a responsibility to aid Gaia and her servants in all things. I nestled in her soft fur the rest of that bitter night. To this day, I rest well in the darkness only when a warm, furry body lies curled at my feet.

I have normal human fears and frailties, despite my faith. My deepest fear is that I'll fail my friends among the werewolves or, more importantly, Ian. I'm terrified I won't be there when they need me, that I won't be able to give fully of myself to save them when the time comes. And the price of my failure, for them, would be too high. Is it within me to part with this kind of heavy coin?

How can I not?

— From the diary of Theadora Corrigan, registered nurse, Fianna Kinfolk

By Oaths Taken and Blood Enjoined

Duty is the sublimest word in our language.

— Robert E. Lee

Bonds of blood, ties of ancestry and oaths of loyalty—these are the links between the werewolves and their Kinfolk. Kinfolk are an essential part of the world of the Garou. But they aren't supernatural creatures, certainly not on the level of the werewolves; they can't turn into nine-foot, seething balls of canid terror and prance through a rain of bullets without a scratch. They're the werewolves' human or wolf relatives, undeniably a valuable part of werewolf society but never quite equals within it. In short, they're family, with all the headaches, sorrows and joys that implies. Kinfolk occupy a range of positions in Garou culture, from beloved mates and siblings to little more than breeding stock or grunt soldiers in the war against the Wyrm. Sometimes, the chains that bind Kinfolk to Garou are loving and freely accepted; other times, they sink Kinfolk in a mire of forced obligations.

Kinfolk outnumber werewolves roughly 10 to one—and considering the decreasing numbers of the Garou, Kin themselves are rare enough in their own right. Human Kinfolk usually live in their own homes or communities, while wolf Kin often dwell in a tribe's protectorates. Many Kinfolk know something of their heritage, but few know everything. The Impergium, for instance, isn't usually a dinner topic in a Garou household! As with lost werewolf cubs, these days, more and more Kinfolk are born to families who have no idea of their Garou connections. Unlike werewolves, Kinfolk go through no Rite of Passage; many grow old and die without ever knowing about their mystical inheritance. These lost Kinfolk represent an ebb in the tide of Garou fortunes. Whether the werewolves realize the truth or not, Kinfolk are links to the future for the Garou. Without Kinfolk, no more Garou will be born; without Kinfolk, the werewolves lose a vital link to the

worlds of humans and wolves. With fewer and fewer of Gaia's soldiers being born, their human and wolf relatives must take on heavier duties in the Dying Times. Perhaps the day is drawing nigh when the Garou must answer for relegating Kin to a second-class role.

So What Makes Somebody Kin?

Kinfolk wear a lot of hats. They might be allies, relatives, vicious enemies, friends, breeders, caretakers or even unwitting pawns. Their treatment varies widely according to tribe and even sept. Save for rare exceptions, though, even the most loving and fair-minded werewolf won't quite see his Kin as equal partners. He may be willing to sacrifice himself for the lives of his Kinfolk family, but it's the reverse that is more often true. Kinfolk are precious assets, but the life of one of Gaia's warriors tends to take precedence over that of a mere wolf or human. The attitude of many werewolves toward their Kin is one of condescension, which leads to both overprotection and belittlement. Some Kin accept such treatment as Gaia's fate; others, like "Skinner" Haight, strike back.

The most important deciding factor in whether someone is Kin or not is her response to the Delirium. Upon seeing a werewolf in Crinos, what's her reaction (other than normal fear)? Can she bear to watch without fainting or running away? Does she rationalize and explain away what she's seen, or can she accept the truth? A bona fide Kinfolk might be afraid, but no Veil shadows her memory of witnessing werewolves in their true forms. Quite rarely, though, a normal human who isn't Kinfolk might have an "immunity" to the Delirium. In this unlikely event, a few other determining factors come into play (see below). Certain Awakened beings, such as vampires, wraiths, mages and changelings, also are immune to the Delirium.

Wolves didn't suffer the Impergium; therefore, they don't experience Delirium, as humans do. But most wolves flee from a Garou in Crinos, simply out of sheer survival instinct.

The second vital component in determining whether a wolf or human is Kin involves genetics. Is he descended from a line of werewolves? Do other members of his pack bear Gaia's favor? Has he sired Garou pups? If so, he's almost assuredly Kinfolk. Genetics isn't an exact science, but the mating of werewolves and Kinfolk produces roughly 90 percent Kinfolk and 10 percent Garou offspring. The mating of two Kinfolk changes the numbers to 50 percent Kinfolk and 1 percent Garou, with the remainder of children being plain folks. Kin who mate with normal mortals usually bear non-Kin children, though certain factions among the Children of Gaia have a highly secretive rite that can alter this outcome. The Background Pure Breed on the part of either Kinfolk or Garou improves all these statistics somewhat.

The more nebulous determinants of Kinfolk status are mindset, spirituality and acculturation. Does the Kinfolk

believe in his duty to Gaia? Did his family raise him to respect the Garou way? Or has he turned his back on his heritage? Perhaps he refuses to accept his responsibility, and thus, does not teach his own offspring about Gaia's path. Or maybe he has no idea of his true heritage. A wolf or human might be immune to the Delirium and genetically Kinfolk, yet separate from that culture because of disbelief or a lack of faith in Gaia. She knows Her own and, if necessary, won't accept one who scorns Her.

Mood and Theme

The Kinfolk have privileged knowledge of Gaia and her children, the Garou. Yet, except for their peripheral roles as wives, lovers, children and friends, they remain forever apart. They're family, but to most werewolves they're somehow less. The mood of their lives is thus bittersweet. The werewolves are rage and aggression made flesh, but they also possess enthralling beauty and live spiritually between the world of humankind and the world of the wolf. For many Kinfolk, loyalty is costly. Faithful Kinfolk must accept heavy, often fatal burdens because of their relation to the werewolves, while they simultaneously realize they'll never know the joys of hunting on four legs. The difficulties Kinfolk face in coping with this conflict set the tone for many stories.

Themes for Kinfolk characters revolve around choices of duty and obligation accorded by family bonds. Kinfolk face difficult decisions merely because of their Garou relatives. Do they aid the werewolves as honorable companions? Do they spurn their Garou relations out of fear? Or do the Kinfolk reject their status as second-class citizens in Garou society? A lesser theme is paranoia, due in large part to the legacy of Samuel Haight. Haight was a Child of Gaia Kinfolk, but he coveted the power of his Garou family and turned to a path of darkness. In his thirst to become a werewolf, he created the Skin Dancer tribe. Many werewolves no longer trust their Kinfolk because of Haight's jealousy and corruption; certainly, these Garou don't tell their relatives about the Skinner's exploits. Some Kinfolk fear losing even their second-class standing in Garou society because of Haight...while others think of the Impergium and worry about more severe repercussions.

Lexicon

Fellowship: A group of Kinfolk who form an alliance. Most Fellowships unify for a certain goal, such as communication or genealogy.

Nanna: A Kinfolk who cares for Garou children or pups.

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

Mare: A female Kinfolk who serves no purpose other than breeding stock; also derogatory.

How to Use This Book

Kinfolk: Unsung Heroes is basically a guide for players and Storytellers to create Kinfolk characters, as well as a sourcebook on the ways in which the larger Kin population surrounds and interacts with Garou society. Obviously, you'll need a copy of **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** in order to develop a Kinfolk campaign. This book is also a resource for crossover games; on rare occasions, the Garou gene can occur in people who become vampires, mages, wraiths or changelings. Likewise, while **Kinfolk** focuses on the Garou, it includes information on the Kin of other Changing Breeds, such as Bastet and Gurahl. Finally, with several templates and a variety of Kinfolk groups and personalities, **Kinfolk** provides a number of story seeds. Storytellers might choose to run a chronicle based entirely upon a group of Kinfolk, or to allow a mixed group of werewolves and Kinfolk characters. The point of **Kinfolk** is to inspire Storytellers and players to really *think* about the complex interactions between Garou and their "normal" human and wolf relatives.

Useful Sources

Werewolf: The Apocalypse and related books recommend sources dealing with spiritual and mythic themes, wolves as "charismatic megafauna" and conflict between

humans and nature. The works below explore the interactions of wolves with humans, the burdens of kinship and the frustrations of being treated like a disenfranchised minority.

For background music, try something maudlin and depressing. Take your pick of Celtic bands, such as Touchstone and Silly Wizards. Old American blues fit the bill, as do newer artists like The Jody Grind, Cowboy Junkies and Kelly Hogan. That perennial World of Darkness favorite, Dead Can Dance, has moved toward a Native American sound in their recent releases that's also very appropriate.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands*. Anzaldúa's use of poetry and Central American myth/lore make this book a different sort of read. The author talks about being a part of many worlds, yet never wholly at home in any.

Bhaji on the Beach. This Indian film crosses generations and ethnicities in showing kinship and the importance of family ties.

Brown, Gary. *Great Bear Almanac*. A good overview of basic information and statistics for all bear species.

Johnson, Sylvia and Aamodt, Alice. *Wolf Pack*. Despite being a children's book, *Wolf Pack* gives a detailed, yet understandable, overview of wolf society. It has some excellent pictures of humans and wolves interacting.

Heinrich, Bernd. *Ravens in Winter*. Heinrich undertakes a quest to understand raven behavior.





Herrero, Stephen. *Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance*. An excellent book on bear-human interactions, ways to survive or avoid them, and the factors that influence bear behavior.

Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac*. This collection of essays by the father of modern wildlife management is a must-read for anyone who plays a loyal Kinfolk, as well as anyone with an iota of environmental awareness. His philosophy in "The Land Ethic" forms a basis for the environmental movement of today. Although written in the first half of this century, the ideas presented here are still relevant and timely.

Lopez, Barry. *Of Wolves and Men*. Delves into the history and social biology of the wolf. The book opens with some excellent descriptions of life from a wolf's point of view.

Mannix, Daniel. *The Fox and the Hound*. Forget the movie. This award-winning novel is told (and told well) from two animal antagonists' points of view.

Mech, L. David. *The Wolf: The Ecology and Behavior of an Endangered Species*. Although written in 1970, this text remains the quintessential scientific work on wolf biology and behavior. It discusses wolf society at length.

Any of the Osprey Men at Arms books are terrific for historical games.

Savage, Candace. *Bird Brains: The Intelligence of Crows, Ravens, Magpies and Jays*. An overview of corvids and a good resource for Corax Kin.

Tan, Amy. *The Joy Luck Club*. Both the movie and the book are funny, yet touching, pieces about the relations of mothers and daughters caught between the past in China and the present in America.

Turgenev, Ivan. *Fathers and Sons*. A classic Russian novel about the clash between generations, politics, parents and children — all appropriate themes for family life in the World of Darkness.



Chapter One: The Society of Kinfolk

Tell me something I don't know instead of everything I do.

Look at me as if I mean something to you.

— Mary Chapin Carpenter, “The Hard Way”

Mindset, Temperament and Personality

I don't know what I thought the first time I saw Ian change. I remember sitting on an old mattress by the side of a deserted bayou highway, just watching him. It was like nothing else mattered, nothing else could fill my eyes like the sight of him. Now, of course, I realize I was in shock at the time — clammy skin, disorientation, that sort of thing. After all, I'd just seen my folks smashed to pieces! If Ian hadn't been there to pull me from the wreck, I would've died too. But he was there; he saved my life.

That night misted over my senses; even now, it seems more like a vivid dream than anything else. As I tried not to cry, wanting to be a big girl and not make a scene, I focused on the one part of my world that was real, my brother. He doesn't hold back his emotions now, and he didn't then, either. He howled into the darkness, and I swear I could almost touch his fury and agony. And then....

It wasn't the fact that he was growing tall and sprouting thick, reddish fur that struck me. The sounds came first:

creaking bones, ripping jeans, groans of...pleasure, I suppose, but pain, too. I had to watch. I couldn't turn away.

Fear? Yes, I felt fear...but not for myself. I knew that, somehow, Ian had just crossed a threshold I couldn't pass. That somehow, our roles had reversed. For so many years, he'd watched over me, picked me up when I fell, bought me ice cream, teased me but damn near killed anybody else who did. That night, I saw I had to protect him. He needed me, and it's just as simple as that.

It sounds weird from a “mere human,” I guess — a “fragile” little fangless thing like me wanting to protect a creature like him. But I think I'm typical of a lot of Kinfolk in my beliefs — surely not all, but plenty, nonetheless. When I heard about the Garou, their war and their duty, I instantly accepted — craved — being a part of that. I wanted to do something that would benefit the Garou, so I finished high school a year early, went right into a nursing program, and here I am today. Werewolves rarely get sick, and Gaia has a lot of ways to heal them after a good scrap, but what about the children? What about the other Kinfolk? Let's just say what I know has come in handy. Other Kin do the same thing; they become veterinarians, foresters



or join the military for training. Those who can afford it buy up land around caerns to keep developers away. Some become computer hackers and make life a little easier on werewolves and Kin alike, through the wonders of modern technology. The best folks give the most of whatever they can.

Some Garou, sad to say, abuse the privilege. They make the women bear three kids every two years, and that's too hard on anybody. Think about it — would you like to go through childbirth every nine months from age 14 to 50? A fertile Kinfolk woman could *technically* bear a few dozen kids in her miserable lifetime. Or what about the Kin who become "shock troops" for Gaia? I know Gaia needs her warriors, and it's better for Kin to know the enemy (or the right end of a gun), but a lot of young Kinfolk die senselessly in an effort to prove themselves. I despise reducing people down to numbers, but that's exactly what some of the more extreme tribes do.

That's the point the Garou seem to miss: We're human beings, dammit! Okay, except for the wolf Kin. But just the same, most of us want to help, out of love for our families, devotion to Gaia's cause or simply because it's a nice feeling to be needed, to be a part of something. Sometimes, even the best werewolves treat us like a bunch of dumb groupies. It gets old. I'll always do *anything* I can to help, even if I'm royally pissed; I don't expect thanks or money, either. But

it would be nice to get some respect. I'm not alone in saying I *hate* being patronized. Why don't the Garou consult Kin on issues that affect us all? Why can't we have a say in moots that pertain to Kinfolk? Why do the Garou refuse to realize these are pretty dark days we live in, and to survive, we'll need to work together?

I think part of the reason is they're a little afraid. *Give an inch, they'll take a mile* is what some of them think about us. Then too, there's been some rotten Kinfolk in the barrel; they've spoiled things for the rest of us. Sam Haight was the worst, but there've been others. Some werewolves think we Kin need to be kept firmly in our place lest we rise up and ruin everything. The rhetoric a lot of them use sounds like the same crap bigots give when trying to "justify" why women and minorities shouldn't have equal rights.

I guess if I had to say one thing about Kinfolk, it's that we want to be thought of as individuals. We all have our own hopes, dreams, demons and egos. Yes, we Kin are Bone Gnawers and Glass Walkers, Stargazers and Uktena, human and wolf, but we aren't just mindless automatons. We have feelings and goals, too. Just once, I'd like to feel like an equal, a partner in all this. After all, didn't Gaia mark me, too? Maybe her favor's a little different for Kin, but it's still there, it sets me apart.

Ever think about how hard things would be *without us*?

The Chicken or the Egg?

Your question is, did the tribe make the Kinfolk, or did the Kinfolk make the tribe? My answer is...yes. I see by your scowl that doesn't satisfy you. Allow me to explain. The first werewolves were very much alike; tribes were meaningless distinctions to them (although the Silver Fangs would tell you otherwise). The Changing Folk spread outward, moving to all corners of the Earth, and wherever they went they found people. From these people, the Garou chose the strongest, the smartest, the fittest with whom to make young. Isolated from other werewolves, each group began to learn from their people, to become more like them. When the Garou of a place were more like each other than the Garou of another place, a tribe was born.

How did the werewolves make the Kinfolk? Yes, I'm getting to that. The Garou would choose individuals most suited to bear their young. A human so claimed was well cared for and much educated. Thus, Kinfolk became chiefs, shamans, councilors, healers, teachers. They guided their people, who became more like their leaders, and so, more like the tribe.

— Boris Yin, Stargazer Kinfolk

Motivations

Have we not done our share?

— Banjo Patterson, "The Last Parade"

Like I said, a lot of things drive Kinfolk either to join in and accept their responsibilities or to turn against the Garou and Gaia. I'd hope most Kin are the join-in types, but I know that's often not the case. Just like our werewolf brethren, we Kin have lots and lots of diversity in our ranks.

So, what are some of these drives I mentioned? I could spend a year writing a list, and it still wouldn't be complete. Most Kin are actual blood relatives to werewolves. Think of it as normal family responsibilities, magnified a thousand times. For others, it's a matter of marriage, which also denotes a lot of familial (and, ahem, reproductive) obligations. Then, there are the rarer Kinfolk who might not be able to find their names on a family tree but who still want to contribute. They feel like they have the most to prove, since they don't have a Garou sibling or spouse, and are often the most gung-ho or spiritually oriented Kin. Some are a little too eager for my tastes, actually. I heard the

founder of the Black Eagle, a Kinfolk mercenary group, couldn't actually name one Garou relative. I doubt anyone could challenge his loyalty and still be able to walk, though.

That's part of why I'm learning as much as I can about Kinfolk, too. Sure, I know what it's like to be Kin — but I keep asking questions, so I can learn what being Kin means for members of other tribes, other countries. This way, I can speak with some serious authority, for whatever it's worth, among the Garou. Yes, I want us "normal humans" to have a little more voice in tribal and sept affairs. More than that, though, I'm pretty sure the werewolves need to hear some of what I've found, from the lips of a Kin like me, before the pressure cooker explodes. The welfare of the Garou Nation depends on it — and, like I said, that welfare means a lot to me.

But what makes a Kin turn against the werewolves? Sad to say, I can make a pretty accurate guess — and I'm treated well, as far as that goes. Usually, it's a matter of resentment or feeling unappreciated. When you risk your life for someone and they don't even bother to say thanks, it can piss you off. If they act like it doesn't matter whether you live or die, well, you might start to feel worthless. Worse, what about the Kinfolk who just can't seem to produce any Garou children? I've heard whispers that a Silver Fang killed his wife because she was barren. That may be just a Shadow Lord rumor, but I've seen with my own eyes men verbally abusing women for bearing "mere Kinfolk." It's practically medieval!

Then there are the Kin who get insanely jealous because Gaia didn't see fit to make them Garou. They're bitter and dangerous. Take a look at Sam Haight, for instance. This psychopath went mad because he never Changed. I don't know how many people he butchered or how many werewolf skins he collected in his time, but his "misfortune" of not being Garou drove him over the edge and caused a lot of destruction. I think this sort of thing happens because the werewolves ignore these jealousies. They leave Kinfolk to "deal with it" alone; the Garou take a "shape up or ship out" attitude some Kin simply can't handle. So, in all honesty, while you'll always have some fruitcakes like "Skinner" Haight out there, the Garou make a lot of their own problems. They need to be a little more attuned to what it's like being left behind when the pack runs off to hunt or calls council at a moot. God knows, I'd never do anything to hurt my tribe, but sure, I get a little jealous on occasion. I mean, it looks like such fun to turn into a wolf. But I'm also content with my own lot, probably because I had a lot of good advice from Ian and others over the years.

I guess the bottom line is that Gaia and her chosen warriors make our beds for us. We either have to learn to lie in them and be prepared to do a little tucking of our own, or else we refuse to lie down at all.

A Matter of Attitude

Damn straight, it's a blast being Kinfolk. There are connections like you wouldn't believe. Completely outside the law, these people can get dirt on the opposition, perform b&e without leaving a trace and provide muscle no other boss can beat. All they ask is some capital, some boltholes and a little legal cover. Sweetest deal in the world! Makes putting up with my sister's bad attitudes worthwhile.

— Bill Nadeau, corporate executive, Glass Walker Kinfolk

What do I think about it? Imagine what it'd be like for someone to call you and say you'd missed out on a million dollars because you got one wrong number on the lottery ticket. That's what it's like — my cousin can tear the top off a car, and he wouldn't get sick if he ate rotten fish in a cafeteria full of ebola victims. He has this spiritual brotherhood with a bunch of arrogant walking carpets who have bad breath and who expect me to act grateful for being allowed to do whatever they say. And what the hell have I got? I was better off before I ever heard of the Garou.

— Chris Wlodkowsky, garage band musician, Get of Fenris Kinfolk

The lycanthropic disease we've observed in certain specimens attacks some family members and not others. However, even the seemingly normal relations are still carriers. Think of lycanthropy as akin to hemophilia without the gender-linked trait. We can learn just as much about the disease by studying the carriers as we can studying people with the genetic expression. An additional bonus is that carriers are much easier to acquire alive.

— Dr. Romain Guy, Progenitor, Sondage Amalgam

I think Kinfolk have a spiritual connection to the earth. I guess everyone does, really, but it's stronger in the Garou lineage. We have an appreciation of nature

and all things wild. A Kinfolk is more likely than most to spare a second look at a beautiful sunset or a dazzling night sky. Not all of our kind see it this way, I know. Some are too caught up in the things of humans — chasing after money to have what advertisers insist they can't do without, living their soap-opera lives and not seeing what the world is really all about. I pity them.

— Danielle Linhart, photographer, Child of Gaia Kinfolk

A blessed existence, is it? We take care of our precious Kinfolk, don't we, Lord and Master Ahroun, most wonderful leader, He-Who-Knows-Best for everyone on the island? Liar! Bastard! You're not fit to call yourself scat of a wolf, much less wolf's brother! Better to call you Killer-of-Children or Raper-of-Mate than anything else! I read the *haole* books about the mother who slew her own children. There is sweeter revenge than death. Every time I hold our new son and see that fire will burn in his eyes, I dream of the moment he will descend into the earth to be reborn. I laugh with joy thinking how your heart will burst should you ever have to face him in battle.

— Iolani Darkmoon, former Uktena Kin, now Black Spiral Dancer Kinfolk

My sister and I grew up knowing we were special. It wasn't until our 13th birthday that I found out just *how* special; Nikki Changed. My grandmother told me what it meant to be Kinfolk. It's a great honor to be who I am, who we are. But it's scary, too. I love Nikki and always will, but I hate seeing her so out of control. It's not that I'll never be able to run as fast again; I forgave her even before the wounds healed. A little lost muscle isn't that big a deal, I guess. But I don't know if I can bear to see that look of hopelessness and anger in my sister's eyes ever again.

— Jesse Ikenberg, Black Fury Kinfolk

Blood Ties

I resign myself to silence.

I will never blow your cover.

— Indigo Girls, "Left Me a Fool"

Most Kin, like me, have blood relatives among the Garou. I'm lucky enough (or unlucky, if you ask any of the younger Fianna guys) to have an older brother who's a werewolf. For other folks, it's their mothers, fathers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins — whoever.

Blood is thicker than water, and I'd say that, in functional families at least, it forms a solid bond between Garou and Kin. I'm leaving out a dark side, I guess, one that speaks of incest, abuse and neglect. I know those things are out there, among Kin, Garou and normal folks alike. Fortunately, though, I've never had to experience any of that

stuff. So, just for a minute, let's paint a rosy picture. Think about the love you have for your mother and father, your grandparents, your siblings and your children. Chances are, there's nothing you wouldn't do for them, right? I'm talking about a range of things, from simply giving up food to laying down your life. What mother wouldn't give up an organ for her child? What loyal son or daughter wouldn't cheat and steal to get parents out of debt? Families can quarrel, snarl and cut one another to the quick, but in times of trouble, they'll stick together.

Garou families are like that too, but even more so. Like I said, my brother and even some of our distant cousins from other tribes give me a lot of teasing, but God forbid some stranger should start getting rowdy! I remember a guy who swatted my fanny in a bar one night. I thought Ian was going to kill him. Not that I couldn't take care of myself!

But because I was a "little sister," and Kin at that, Ian and some of his pals gave the guy a serious thrashing. The werewolves do take pride in their loyal Kinfolk, though it's often the sort pushy parents take in their snotty, overachieving kids — you know, the sporty ones and the kids who take calculus when they're 12 years old. Often, Garou push us to do more than seems possible, and sometimes they protect us to the point of smothering. Some tribes cloister pregnant females like nuns; I've seen more than one Kinfolk girl in my practice who begs me to keep her condition secret, so she won't be locked up for nine months. And I usually help the poor thing as best I can. I've dealt with some pissed-off Garou spouses and parents, but when I tell them my concern is for both mother and child, they usually back off.

Of course the protective relationship works both ways. In times of trouble, we won't panic; we're the only ones who can handle being around a raging werewolf without turning into gibbering idiots. It goes without saying that there's little we can do to hold back a Garou until the storm has passed, of course, but at least we can calm things down a bit. It's a heavy burden, knowing we're the *only* folks the werewolves can rely on. I'd say most Kin drop anything they're doing to help a Garou relative in need. In my opinion, that's simply our fate, to care for these soldiers. A lot of religions and philosophies talk about how intrinsically *wrong* it is to struggle against fate, that karma or poetic justice or whatever always rewards or punishes you in the end. I absolutely believe this, particularly in connection to the Garou and their Kin. God, Allah, Gaia, the Great Spirit or whoever gave us this job, so we have to do the best we can with it.

Blood also fetters our lives in hatred as well as love, I'm afraid to say. Some Kin come to despise that cloying overprotectiveness from their Garou families. They run away from it at best and destroy it at worst. I once met a woman who was the daughter of a Black Fury, though you'd never know it. She refused to have anything to do with "radical feminism," as she put it. After hearing her trash her tribe so completely, I wonder if she somehow was beginning to forget the truth of the Garou. I never once heard her speaking about the beauty of Gaia's people, just their ugliness and brutality. Perhaps, in some way I can't comprehend, Kinfolk like her start forgetting things about the Garou. Sounds like Gaia has some sort of Veil against wayward Kin, doesn't it?

As I said before, Sam Haight was only the worst; a number of Kinfolk have betrayed their people. Some knowingly joined up with the fallen Black Spirals, like Iolani Darkmoon, bent on some kind of vengeance against the werewolves. Others, like that crazy Get Kin Chris Wlodkowski, just have a pine cone up their arses about not Changing; folks like him usually settle for verbal sedition.



But these people can be pretty dangerous. So I have to ask, how did the Garou themselves contribute to these situations?

Well, in Iolani's case, the werewolves—or one of them, at least—were directly responsible. Iolani was the daughter of a famous Hawai'ian *kahuna*, as I understand it, and she had a fine reputation in her own right. She married an Uktena leader and, though none of us *haole* Fianna got an invite, our sept heard about the ceremony. Then, something went wrong. Rumors say she went postal after she lost her first child in a miscarriage. I saw her once, and much as I hate to suggest the idea, she had a sort of haunted and hurt look about her, like someone who got beaten up on a regular basis. God knows I've seen it often enough at work and cried tears of pity and anger to see the pattern keep repeating itself. I'm not saying this is a fact, but if she was abused, it might explain some things. It doesn't make her joining the Black Spirals right, but at least I understand where she was coming from.

Intermarriage

Breeding is such an ugly business.

— Harlan Ellison, *A Boy and His Dog*

Ah, yes, marriage. "True love." Well, it does happen among all the tribes. I've honestly seen more genuine love and devotion than dynastic unions. Garou are naturally passionate creatures, and they consider it honorable to take

a mate and breed. Even the courtship and mating of lupus Garou and wolf Kin has playfulness and affection. Most tribes celebrate the union of Kinfolk and Garou with joy. And "marriage" and "mating" have a lot of meanings across Garou culture. To some tribes, it's a formal, social affair, just like you'd see on a soap opera—white dress, black tie, cake and all that mess. To others, it's just a simple affirmation of commitment without all the legal entanglements. In wolf society, the entire pack witnesses the alpha pair mating. They actually have better, um, morals than us humans—some werewolves and Kinfolk aren't above one-night stands, if the mood is right. Hence, the fragmentation of Garou families and occasional lost cubs or Kin.

But all too often, the Garou take "bloodlines" more seriously. I suppose they hope the intended couple likes each other, but it's not a requirement. I'm sorry, I can't quite imagine a moment of sensual passion with someone I don't love, much less hardly know! But I guess passion isn't really the object of the exercise, is it?

What about marriage across tribes? Even Gaia can't still passions of the heart. To a lot of tribes (mostly the Bone Gnawers, Children of Gaia, Glass Walkers, Silent Striders, a few Fianna and Stargazers), deeds, not blood, prove worth. If a Kinfolk is loyal and honorable, then a lot of folks don't have a problem mating with other tribes. The Children of Gaia and Silent Striders are the most notorious, but I'd be a liar if I called Fianna blood pristine, no matter how



seriously they take their Celtic heritage! In most cases, Kinfolk mates, whether male or female, take on the identity of their new tribe. For example, if I risked Ian's wrath and fell in love with some nice Child of Gaia Philodox, chances are most people would consider me a Kinfolk of that tribe and not the Fianna. The new identity wouldn't mean I'd lose ties with the Fianna, of course; it's just that other Garou and Kin would identify me as having a stronger connection to the Children of Gaia.

Now, let me let you in on a bit of a misconception about the Get of Fenris. There's surely no love lost between the Fianna and the Get, that's for certain! But I intend to give credit where it's due, and I have to admit to a grudging admiration for the devotion many Get have for their families. I use that word "family" kind of loosely, too. A drop of Get blood and zeal for the cause gets you included in the fun and glory. Plus, think about the grandiose tales of wordfame where the Norse spent decades avenging wrongs done to their families. The same is still true of the Fenrir and their mates. It'd be easy to think the Get are interested only in racial purity and that rot, but the truth is more complicated than that. I daresay there are plenty of Get who buy that hard line — as well as the hardcore dominance freaks who beat their wives or children if family members aren't offering up the proper respect — but a lot are people who care about their families more than their racial stock.

The Shadow Lords, on the other hand, are picky about the mates they choose; the question they ask, though, is, "who can benefit me best?" Thus, one of them might choose a mate from outside the tribe, if such a person can serve a vital function or fill an essential need. Often, but not always, Shadow Lords want to mate with rich Kin who are in positions of power. In other words, it's the connections that're vital, not the money or the mileage.

The Silver Fangs make no secret of the fact they maintain strict dynastic lines.⁴ Most of them know the far-reaching ancestry of their Kinfolk, and, with only rare exceptions, all their Kin are blue-blooded aristocrats. Many have wealth, but not all; lineage, not money, is most important. Silver Fang Kinfolk in the southeastern United States really make a big to-do of the whole thing, with "family registries" and so on. Like the Get, and for similar reasons, the Silver Fangs generally stick with their own kind. I guess if someone of another tribe had *really* noble blood, they might make an exception.

Red Talons mate only with their wolf Kin, pure and simple. At least, that's the official party line. But more than one Garou of human stock has found a mate among those same Kin! In a couple of bardic circles, I've heard tales of an old Red Talon Kinfolk that the Moondancers named Nightmist. He sired dozens of children among the Black Furies, Silent Striders and Uktenea, in addition to the ones in his own tribe. I also seem to recall the alpha drove him from the pack, though I guess that's a story for another time.

Then there's the Wendigo. Ask most people on the street, and they'd tell you that somewhere in their veins they've got Indian blood. I think the Wendigo would like to discourage this mixing. Some septs disown Kin who marry outside the tribe; a few even kill Kin for such indiscretions. With their numbers dwindling, the Wendigo are more desperate than ever not to have their people "tainted" by white outsiders.

I've talked a lot about marriage and mating, but let me add one thing. What if otherwise loyal Kin don't want to mate with Garou and instead choose other Kin or even normal humans or wolves? Well, the party line is that it's a no-no. A loss of status is what we can generally expect, but I don't think it's as big a sin as it used to be, simply because there are far more Kin than werewolves these days. In all of the tribes, you'll find both extreme stereotypes and exceptions to every rule, of course.

Garou-Kinfolk Relations and Expectations

*You've got to measure up
And make me prouder.*

— Alanis Morissette, "Perfect"

As far as specific expectations beyond mating, the first and most important is answering the call. If the werewolves ask Kinfolk to help, we must do so. Period. Otherwise, we risk being kicked out, or abandoned or getting a constant earful of abuse. That's a heavy price to pay in a harsh world. A lot of Kin would rather do anything than risk being an outsider. I've said it once, and I'll say it again: the werewolves are our families, and though we may think they're a pain in the ass, they're still our relatives.

Self-sacrifice is also important. The Garou expect us Kin to give all we've got when they ask for it. Eventually, they'll make a demand that causes us pain and loss. It could be in terms of time taken from our careers, money we need to survive or even loss of life and limb. Sacrifice comes in terms of emotional costs, too. Even the most loyal Kinfolk parent is going to suffer when he sees his son or daughter die in a fight against the Wyrm.

Some werewolves respect the fact that we Kin are tough even though we *can't* change. I could dance naked on the shores of Galway Bay praying to Gaia 'til I turned green in the face and never, ever be anything other than mere Kinfolk. Facts are facts; physically, I'll never be as powerful as a Garou. No Kinfolk could, even after years of training. The wiser tribes, to my mind, channel our energies towards things we can excel at. None of which means they'll let up on the high expectations, but at least they'll ask for things we have a chance of giving. Like how I was always good in school and loved taking care of people: Ian and the other folks of his sept drove me, all right, but they pushed me towards something I enjoyed and could use for the good of



the tribe. I've heard similar tales from Glass Walkers. If a Kinfolk is good at something, the tendency is to nurture that talent to extremes. It'd be pretty stupid for me to become a gun-toting mercenary, for example.

Yet that's exactly what nuts like the Shadow Lords do. They call the shots completely; I wouldn't be a bit surprised if they regulated when their Kin got a chance to crap. I don't think they see Kin as real people or wolves; they're definitely a commodity, not feeling, breathing, living creatures.

How do the Kinfolk feel about that? A lot actually revel in it. Both people and animals have a certain structure to their lives, and some can't survive without it. The lives of Kin to the Get of Fenris, Shadow Lords and even Silver Fangs and Red Talons have routine and procedure in spades. Many folks need a cause to fight for, and do the werewolves ever have one! To put a positive spin on all this, I guess I'd say it's nice to be needed.

But as I said earlier, life as a less-than-equal gets old. The truth of the matter is that Kinfolk actually outnumber Garou; it's simple genetics, if science has a place in any of this. What's going to happen if another Haight comes along? Will the werewolves wipe us out? Will the Kinfolk achieve a new equality? And what part will Kinfolk play in the Apocalypse? I admit I don't really understand what it is or when it'll be, but many's the Irish tale where a small oversight wreaked terrible disaster. Perhaps it's not the Wyrm that's going to cause the destruction of the Garou, but their own conceit. Perhaps we Kin are going to play a more pivotal role in saving Gaia than anyone believes.

Tribal Voices

For us the minority, the opportunity to see geese is more important than television, and the chance to find a pasque-flower is a right as inalienable as free speech.

— Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*

My tribe, the Fianna, are a relatively good bunch of folks, even though bragging Galliards like my brother would have you believe they know *everything*. But I'm a little more practical; I take things with a grain of salt. The Fianna might have one take on Kinfolk, but there are 13 tribes and lots of views, even within a single tribe. I can't possibly know what everyone thinks. So I got online and made a few phone calls and tried to get the "truth" in as many forms as I could. What I assembled isn't the whole picture, but it's a fair sample from some of the heroes (and fools) out there.

My absolute greatest help has come from Professor Lloyd Warner, a scholar working for a think tank in Austin. He's made an informal study of Kinfolk; most seemed pretty willing to talk to him. Let's just say that he managed to find out things I had no idea about.

From the Journal of Lloyd Warner, Elder Brother of the Arcanum, Child of Gaia Kinfolk

I first became interested in the subject of Kinfolk (being one myself) while I was a professor of history. My retirement from

Thicker Than Water

What's it really like to live with someone—a sibling, parent or spouse—who's a werewolf? What happens to family unity when a simple quarrel over doing the dishes turns into a bloody brawl? To put it mildly, life in a Garou household isn't the sappy sweetness and light of *Father Knows Best*; it's more like *Punch and Judy* with fangs and claws.

First off, most werewolves find it extremely difficult to enjoy any semblance of normal family life at all. The Curse, the Rage, the ties to the spirit world—these things seethe inside every werewolf's psyche. More than one of Gaia's warriors has accidentally slain a beloved family member in a fit of anger or passion and had to face rejection from Kin, as well as her own emotional loss and pain. Kinfolk understand what makes werewolves different, but they've still got human feelings! Forgiveness is hardly ever easy.

In most families, roles are negotiable; while, traditionally, men were the breadwinners and women were the childbearers, this isn't the case any longer. Often, both spouses work outside the home and share more in childcare and daily chores. The word "family" has come to mean a lot more things than the 1950s concept of mommy, daddy and two perfect children. Yet the werewolves mess up this flexible system; having a dominant partner or pup is part of their mindset. How does a Kinfolk man deal with ribbing from business partners over his domineering wife? He may be able to cope with the fact that his wife's an Ahroun, but he sure can't explain that to the guys at the office!

Raising children is no bed of roses, either. Kids love to test their parents and see just how far they can push and still get away with it. What about when the little darlings hit puberty? Any *normal* human parent'll likely pull their hair out. Now imagine what happens when a Kin's son or daughter undergoes the Change. Ground the angry young Ragabash for missing curfew? I think not! Kinfolk parents have a lot more headaches than just coping with raging hormones and growing pains. They have to teach discipline and respect for traditions, while they know all along that their kid is *somewhat* superior to them. There's no way this could be easy.

The bottom line is: Kinfolk make up an integral part of werewolf families. But they aren't infallible; situations that are hard for "normal" families—drugs, teen pregnancy, breaking rules, throwing tantrums—are twice as bad for Kin. Too much is at stake for them to do less than their best, yet empathy and understanding go only to a certain point. If there's to be a winner in family situations involving Garou and Kinfolk, the werewolves will come out on top every time. Kin either come to accept this reality or cut ties with their werewolf relations.

Of course, there's a variety of opinions among the tribes....

Conjugal Bliss

She's here today and gone tomorrow. Moldy and I've been married, all right and proper like, too, for about eight years. If I've spent a solid month with her in that time, I'd be surprised. But that's the way it is. I could leave, but who's to say it'd be any different with another woman of the tribe? It's just the way they are. The animal side of 'em, that's what makes her so flighty, y'know.

— Brugie, Bone Gnawer Kin

Lisbet, she's a good woman, a good wife. We have three beautiful children, two sons and a daughter. But I won't say life as husband to the sept leader is a bed of roses. My father taught me that the man of the house needed to be in charge, to always take care of his family. With Lisbet, this isn't easy; in fact, it's hardly possible. How can I be in charge when she's a strong leader of many werewolves and Kin in her own right? Some days, I have to bite my tongue, and that does get old.

— Michael Andersson, Get of Fenris Kinfolk

Raisin' Young'uns

Katie was a wonderful child, but we drifted apart so early on. I mean, one day she's tinkering with an old typewriter and the next, wham! She's doing things on my laptop it took years for me to learn. Being a single parent, I tried to give her everything and spend as much time with her as I possibly could. But after she started high school, it seemed like I wasn't nearly as important to her as the tribe was. It hurt a lot; she's part of me too.

— Charles Little, Glass Walker Kin

I teach at the reservation school, and sometimes I have to laugh at the other mothers. They complain of unruly sons. Do they ever cower in fear, knowing that the wolf lives within their child? Do their tears fall at night because their sons may die at dawn in the dreamlands?

— Alice Coldwaters, Uktena Kinfolk

The Parental Units

The proof sat there all along: the sad look in my mother's eyes, whispers among my cousins, my paternal grandmother, who was kinder to me than the other kids. I was just too stupid and blind to see it. I always felt like I was split, alone, part of something I couldn't name. My dad never said much; he just kinda drifted from day to day without any life to him. One day, as I helped Mom clean out the attic, I found the baby book. I found what they'd been hiding. We were two, you see, me and my sister. I was part of something. And he killed her. How? I don't know, and I don't care. One day, he'll pay.

— Marion Roberts, Child of Gaia Kin

Listen, you have no idea what it's like to watch someone you love slowly lose her mind. First, it was forgetfulness. She'd forget where she put her gloves, her hat, stuff like that. Then, I'd find food hoarded away in the back of the closets, and she'd think nothing of it. I know a lot of children have to face up to the fact that their parents get old and senile, but what do you do when it happens to your mom while she's just in her forties? And half the time she's a wolf?

— Stephen Karamov, Silver Fang Kinfolk

academia was more than a few years ago, and, of late, work for the Arcanum has kept me busy. I've been fortunate enough to meet Changing Kin who know a great deal about their own kind and are willing to share tales with me. Most Kinfolk know little or nothing of other tribes, and barely understand their own! Many tribes keep their Kin in the dark about the ways of the Garou. It's said that, in some rural lands, Kinfolk hear only the distorted legends of werewolves, including the lore that the bite of a werewolf passes on their curse. When the local Garou sense a youth about to undergo First Change, they attack the fledgling, which supposedly gives their victim lycanthropy. When the poor youngster accidentally frenzies (perhaps killing a few people along the way), he'll likely be driven from the community, after which the horrified Firster is taken in by the werewolves and taught his place in the tribe. This is common among Black Spiral Dancers, but not unknown among other tribes (the Shadow Lords spring to mind, but perhaps that's just my bias).

Originally, tribes claimed their Kinfolk based on geography and culture. Fianna, for example, chose those people who eventually would be known as the Celts, while the Get of Fenris took the Germanic and Scandinavian tribes as their breeding stock. The Silver Fangs were among the first to break the tradition by decreeing that, as they were the first and noblest tribe, it was their right to claim the fairest and noblest Kinfolk.

You may expect Kinfolk to fit the stereotype of the tribe that claims them, but generalizations are hazardous. Don't assume that every Glass Walker Kinfolk closes million-dollar deals over a power lunch, that a Black Fury relative is born with a NOW placard in her hand or that a Stargazer Kinfolk spends his days in a lotus position. On the other hand, stereotypes had their start somewhere, and so I present some general tendencies in the information I shared with Miss Corrigan.

Black Furies

For the beauty of strong, creative women is "ugly" by misogynistic standards of "beauty..."

— Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*

Well, Professor, I'm sure you know the stereotypes. But don't think for a minute that all Fury Kin are either slathering bull dykes or nurturing mother figures. There are some, well, bimbos. You know, the ones that like to control CEOs and topple careers. That tart Senator Porkbarrel was found in bed with may well have been Kin. We have the same variety as any other women, whether that means we live up to certain archetypes or not — we just have a generous helping of self-esteem.

Obviously, since the Furies (much to the dismay of the most radical of the lot) haven't perfected parthenogenesis, a lot of the tribe's Kinfolk must be male. (It's hard for an all-female tribe to produce viable offspring without *both* genetic parents having the gene, you know!) Some Furies go

to great lengths to find a wolf partner — I suppose because he'll know his place and won't act like a prick in the morning. To give them credit, the Furies generally have a higher opinion of a male if he's Kin. Let's just say that Furies can feel the bonds of love as deeply as any two beings can — even with a man. And wolves mate for life.

— Christina Dobson, gymnast, Black Fury Kinfolk

Professor Warner's commentary:

As might be expected, many Fury Kinfolk are activists of one sort or another. Like Kinfolk of the Children of Gaia (with whom they often work), Fury Kin strive for the betterment of society; unlike Gaia's Children, their focus usually falls on women. Kinfolk may be doctors, rape crisis counselors, lawyers, or family planning advisors; they often join organizations dealing with women's rights or health. I've found some evidence of a branch of Fury Kin who live in isolated communities and practice a sort of Amazon lifestyle, but despite a number of expeditions, I failed to find any of the actual settlements.

Bone Gnawers

You will never find a more wretched hive of scum and villainy.

— Obi-Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars*

Here, try a piece of this chicken gizzard. I get 'em real cheap down at the butcher shop. No one else seems to want these extra parts. I grill 'em with a little barbecue sauce and honey mustard. Delicious! Thanksgiving's always the best time, though. Then there's turkey necks for the takin'!

So you wanna know about us Bone Gnawer Kin, eh? Well, probably most of what you've heard is true: We stick together better than any other tribe of Garou and Kin. We watch each others' hides 24 hours a day. Bone Gnawers don't make a whole lotta distinction between Kin and Garou; we're all servin' Gaia together, aren't we? Our families are pretty big, and we figure even the most distant cousin or friend of a friend's part of the group. We Kin are vital for maintaining the Barking Chain, the tribe's gossip line. Most people never give a second glance to bums on the street, stray dogs, or even their household help. All these folks are gatherin' information for the Chain, soakin' up things they hear and see, then passin' it along. We're better informed than the Glass Walkers, I daresay.

Sure I can't interest you in a turkey neck? They do get gone kinda fast when the rush hits.

— Mr. Fixer, self-styled gourmet chef, Bone Gnawer Kinfolk

Professor Warner's commentary:

The Bone Gnawers possess relatively congenial Kinfolk, even if one doesn't subscribe to their sense of aesthetics. Their manners and morals appear drastically different from those of any other tribe. For instance, I notice they have few restrictions in choosing a mate; most seem to participate in a polygamous arrangement that has no boundaries. While



such mores may be offensive to us, I must quickly point out that the Bone Gnawers seem perfectly content and happy. Indeed, I found it difficult on occasion to distinguish Kin from Garou, so mingled were they.

Alas, I made no connections with the "country" Bone Gnawers. A project comparing the lifestyles of urban and rural members of this tribe would prove very interesting. Evidence shows Bone Gnawer Kin live in most major cities worldwide, as well as isolated communities in the Appalachians, Alleghenies and Ozarks.

Children of Gaia

Hope has a place in a lover's heart.

— Enya, "Hope Has a Place"

Dear Thea,

It's great to hear from you! I got a postcard from Cousin Rain when you two went to that medieval thing in Pennsylvania, but haven't heard from her since. Hope life in the Big Easy is treating you well.

It's always hard to give a clear answer about my personal philosophy on life, much less represent that of our Kinfolk! But I'll give it my best attempt. I think it's fair to say that the Children of Gaia treat their Kin better than any other tribe does. Perhaps it's because the Children have a closer connection to the world of humans than do the others. I like to think they see and appreciate our worth the most. They give us Kin a lot of responsibility, but they also offer

their sincere gratitude for what we do. I'm sure you know, working with people all the time, how far thanks and a friendly smile go when you're dead on your feet. It's like the sun's come out on a cloudy day.

I think our greatest asset is our willingness to give the rules of Garou society a good flexing. I mean, some of that stuff is long outdated! What's wrong with Kin marrying Kin, for example? What could it possibly hurt, as long as it's a celebration of Gaia's love? You might be surprised to know that we've occasionally taken in people off the street and taught them the ways of being Kinfolk with a lot of success! I know most tribes say that it's a matter of heritage and genetics, but we say different. It's more a matter of belief and pureness of spirit, if you ask me. Gaia is understanding and willing to welcome any who want peace, even if they don't happen to be born of Garou.

Finally, we have the biggest Fellowship of any tribe, the Gaia Network. Thanks to a Glass Walker Kinfolk named Strangelove (by the by, I passed your call for help on to him or her — not sure which), we've now got the Network connected to the Internet. It's going to be a great resource and time saver. The Network also has a lot of splinter groups that organize among youth, educators, environmentalists and so on. Admittedly, it's a bit sad that the largest Fellowship there is numbers only about a thousand members or so, but that's a reflection of the times more than anything else.

Well, that should give you a broad picture of things. If you need any more info, don't hesitate to drop me a line. And if you change your mind about settling down with a nice Fianna boy, let me be first on your phone list! Say hi to Rain if you see her, and remind her that all I want for my birthday is more of that mead she brews.

Gaia's peace and love be with you, dear friend.

— John Hildebrandt, mechanic, Child of Gaia Kinfolk

Professor Warner's commentary:

Mr. Hildebrandt's description of the Children of Gaia Kinfolk is relatively accurate; I speak, of course, from my own experiences. I can substantiate the fact that certain humans have *become* Kinfolk with nurturing and acculturation. It is by no means a common process, and seems to require some sort of latent predisposition toward the Ways, but I believe it remarkable nonetheless. The level of communication the Gaia Network maintains among Kin, werewolves and humans is impressive; furthermore, the Children of Gaia deeply consider the findings of the Network. Among all Garou, this tribe is much more apt to include its Kin in its sacred activities. Although I don't possess them myself, certain of our Kin have Gifts, even as do the werewolves themselves. Mind you, I must stress that this knowledge isn't to be casually disseminated, even to other Kin, Miss Corrigan! Lifting the Veil is, of course, a violation of the werewolves' Litany. The Children of Gaia, however, believe that breaking unjust laws is sometimes necessary and right.

If we have a regret, it's that we, almost as much as the Glass Walkers, have lost touch with our wolf Kin. This loss affects us all; it's my personal belief that new contact should become a priority for our Kinfolk with all due haste. Our numbers are great and geographically diverse; all we need is someone to take up the challenge.

Fianna

*For all their wars are merry,
And all their songs are sad.*

— G. K. Chesterton, "Ballad of the White Horse"

We're steadfast and steady, yet vibrant and alive, warriors, artists, writers, musicians beyond compare. And our Changing Kin hold us dear; since the beginning, we've fought and sung and drunk beside them. Unfortunately, our people have tempers to match the Fianna's, and when we fight, we drag them along with us. It's a shame. The Irish Kin usually have it the worst — too many of them carry the Troubles with them wherever they go, and it blinds them to the real war all too often.

As to the wolf Kinfolk, sad to say they're few. In the native lands of the Fianna, we carefully hide and protect them from prying scientists and tourists. They enjoy more freedom in North America, where Kinfolk packs roam throughout the north. Only the diligent work of biologists and conservation organizations sustains the red wolves, endangered cousins of the grays. These rare creatures live



only in the southern Appalachian mountains and on the Virginia/North Carolina coast. I don't know if we can save them, but we won't give up. If we fail, we lose more than just another species; we lose one more link in the fight for Gaia's salvation.

— Molly MacArthur, wildlife biologist, Fianna Kinfolk
Professor Warner's commentary:

Fianna Kinfolk trace their origins from the Celts of the British Isles or Brittany. While the Fianna once extended across the European continent, their influence has waned and their Kinfolk have integrated with other cultures and tribes. In the last two centuries, the Irish led an exodus to the Americas; the majority of American Fianna can probably trace some relative to this influx. Scottish and English Fianna are common in the American East, especially in the mountains and rural communities. Apart from that, they are truly found in numbers only in the British Isles, and a few concentrated pockets here and there.

Get of Fenris

Allegiance they preserve inviolate and will never brook the slightest hint of betrayal.

— Anna Comnena

Our ancestors grew strong and tall in an unforgiving land. The whole world feared them. They were intrepid explorers, fearless warriors, master traders and artisans. Their hands shaped Western civilization! And the Fenrir chose the greatest of them as worthy companions. Together, they plied the whale's road and discovered the New World centuries before any of the greedy Spaniards. The fierce and cunning raids of the Northmen struck terror in Europe and brought its people together. Feudalism was born from the Fenrir's might. Because they bartered with as much cunning as they fought, they traded with all the known world, and their standards were recognized from Dublin to Kiev, Lisbon to Samarkand, Alexandria to Krakow. Because their loyalty and skill were beyond compare, our Kinfolk Varangian Guard served as bodyguards to the Byzantine emperors. Kingdoms have risen and fallen by the might of our Kin.

Even now, all whom we call Kinfolk bear the name with pride, for we're tried and tempered, pushed beyond the limits of the average mortal. To be tested and accepted by the greatest warriors in the world — no greater honor can we ask for. Of course, not all persevere. Some die or break; others turn against their Changing brethren. But all who survive are strong and proud.

— Ingrid Andersen, communications specialist, the Black Eagle, Get of Fenris Kinfolk

Professor Warner's commentary:

The Get push themselves to extremes and treat their human and wolf Kin little different; it makes for great strength and unity among their families. If you value your life, never cross a Kinfolk of the Fenrir. Not only will his

sisters, brothers and parents come after you, so will his cousins, uncles, aunts and grandparents, humans, wolves, and Garou alike! Consider for a moment the story of *Das Nibelungenlied*, and my meaning becomes clear. While the Get may never forget a slight, neither do they forget loyalty. They're well known for including the most distant relations as part of the celebrated extended family. The ancient custom of hospitality is still quite a serious obligation among this tribe.

Get of Fenris Kinfolk tend to dwell close to their Garou families, usually in pocket communities. Many seem to favor areas of Minnesota and Wisconsin, as well as certain portions of Pennsylvania. I understand the Black Forest is a particular sticking point among Get, as it holds the greatest concentration of their wolf Kin and is endangered by the actions of various corporations.

Glass Walkers

Thou shalt not make a machine in the likeness of a man's mind.

— Frank Herbert, *Dune*

To: thearn@hmehlth.no.org

From: strangelove@unowhere.fltrwld.com

Subj: That Kinfolk Thing You Do

Hi Thea,

Nice to "meet" you, as it were! I'm glad Hildebrandt put us in touch. I'm forwarding you an encoded file on the Locksmiths, too; if you need directions on how to download it, let me know.

What do we Glass Walker Kin do for the tribe? That's easy: We gather and store information on just about any topic you could name. We also surf the Net, write software and take care of most of the tribe's finances. (It helps that our tribe is pretty upfront with us, really — I'd say among the tribes, the GWs have the highest percentage of "in the know" relatives, if you know what I mean.) In other words, we do a lot of the day to day stuff so they can worry about bigger worms in the poodle, if you get my drift. Oh, and we serve as companions and lovers and those things, too. But that's not as important, IMHO.

Think of us as the tiny little parts that hold a machine together. Maybe it could function without us, but not without a lot of wear and tear on the system. You get my drift.

Catch you later,

— Strangelove, computer geek, Glass Walker Kinfolk

Professor Warner's commentary:

Strangelove, whatever he/she/it is, has gained a reputation not only among the Glass Walkers but other tribes as well. I've heard speculation that it's really a computer, a Kinfolk with some disability, a hermaphrodite or even a mystick. Whatever the truth, it does exemplify the skills of Glass Walker Kin to perfection. Even though no one sees

him/her/it, Strangelove is constantly working for the tribe online.

Strangelove does fail to mention, however, that some Kin dwell among the cities' shadier elements, in the Mafia, Yakuza and street gangs. Some have climbed to high positions in city governments, not always through legal means.

Red Talons

For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack.

— Rudyard Kipling, "Law of the Jungle"

Except for Smells-Sharp-Dominant, I am more strong-quick-healthy than others in pack, and they submit to me. If leader seems weak, I test him. He shows strength, I stop. I am only one to test Smells-Sharp-Dominant; others cautious-nervous-fear him. After curl-horn-prey kicked me, Smells-Sharp did not drive me away, but made sure I got food until I could run with pack once more. Smells-Sharp is strong, and our pack is little hungry; he is worthy as leader.

— Wide-Ruff-Torn-Ear (Greymane), Red Talon Kinfolk

Professor Warner's commentary:

I'm afraid my efforts on this subject were a little less than successful, Miss Corrigan, despite the assistance of your brother as translator. The lupus aspect of the Kinfolk population wanes with every passing year; what can this mean for a tribe that claims only wolves to sustain it? In their own way, they're as exclusive in breeding habits as the Silver Fangs; consequently, the Talons are among the smallest tribes. Only large litters seem to sustain them.

Relations between Talons and Kinfolk are very straightforward. Talons dominate their Kinfolk, which, in turn, dominate normal wolves. In this way, they avoid strife and assure harmony. Talons protect wolves of their blood with ferocity greater than that normally used against humans. In the past few years, decreased predator control allowed them to expand throughout Eurasia and into parts of the north-western United States. The bulk of Talon Kinfolk now lives in Canada, Alaska, Siberia and parts of Minnesota.

Shadow Lords

Come, you spirits...fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full of direst cruelty!

— Shakespeare, *MacBeth*

Let me begin by saying that perhaps everything you may have heard from the other tribes about our tribe's "mistreatment" of Kin is incorrect. It's absolutely right and proper that we Kinfolk don't have the same standing as the Garou members of our families. Why? Because we're not equals. We Kin are lesser beings, and it would be a crime against nature for us to presume otherwise. It's wrong to fight against what Gaia has ordained. No good comes from

anyone trying to get out of line; look at what a mess this country is in today, with everyone wanting equality. They're the ones who are causing all the problems by rebelling against the people in charge. They need to settle down and just be content with what they've got, if you want my opinion.

That said, I can barely begin to list how much we Kin accomplish for the tribe. And we're proud to do it, too. Whatever and whenever the call, we're willing to answer; that goes for Shadow Lords here as well as our relations back in the old country. Take my work, for instance. I'm a tax assessor, and through my efforts, the tribe acquired a great deal of land and resources in parts of the Midwest. Unethical, you say? No, it's not. Because what the tribe asks for, I'll give. My personal code of honor is nothing compared to the needs of the Shadow Lord elders.

— Julia Kamansky, tax assessor, Shadow Lord Kinfolk

Professor Warner's commentary:

I'm merely an observer, and it's not my place as a social scientist to pass judgment. I can say little else about this tribe that Mrs. Kamansky has not said already. The very structure of her words, both what she says and how she says it, illustrates the position of Kinfolk in Shadow Lord society. As open-minded as my own tribe is, we still understand the importance of some leadership and hierarchy. But privately, Miss Corrigan, I admit the extent of submissiveness in her attitude and outlook both frightened and sickened me. If all Shadow Lord Kin think this way, if their leaders believe these "destinies" to be true, then I'm afraid for the future. Here lies a keg of powder waiting to explode. One day, I fear, a Shadow Lord Kin with too much power will fall deeply into darkness. I pray he or she doesn't take the rest of us along that road.

Silent Striders

Oh the wayward wind is a restless wind, a restless wind that yearns to wander.

And he was born the next of kin, the next of kin to the wayward wind.

— Patsy Cline, "Wayward Wind"

Why should I worry? It's a clear day. Traffic's light, but walking's fine. You get to see where you're going. I'll hit a little town 'fore dark and trade a song or story for some food and a piece of floor.

Been walking since I was 16. My Ma turned me loose, seein' as how I wanted to go s'bad. Maybe it's her tales of the road, of all the places she's been, that made me want to see it all for myself. Or maybe it's just the blood of rovers in my veins. I figure I'll see her again, and when I do, she'll hear about the thousand places I seen and all the folks I talked to.

— Johnny Longshank, drifter, Silent Strider Kinfolk

Professor Warner's commentary:

It stands to reason that this small tribe claims few Kin. To complicate matters, their Kinfolk are scattered across the globe. Some live sedentary lives, but many more are slaves to their Strider blood. Several Bedouin and Romany families have Strider Kin, as do many circus performers, bikers, truckers, roadies and sailors, all with a need to see the next town, top the next ridge, find the next port and so on. Striders are always welcome in the homes and camps of their Kinfolk; such visits let them keep tabs on who's where and so on. Of course, the Striders encounter Kin of various tribes in their travels, and it's not uncommon for them to adopt one for a night or two. Frankly, they doubtless have more Kin than they keep track of, but their nomadic penchant keeps them from infallibly realizing just who is born with the gene — or even which of their partners produced children.

Silver Fangs

What infinite heart's ease must kings neglect that private men enjoy!

— Shakespeare, Henry V

Dear Miss Corrigan,

Thank you for inquiring about the history of the Silver Fangs. Naturally, you want to add our views to your interesting little project.

It is only fitting that the leaders of the Garou would have Kinfolk who likewise lead country and pack. We trace our families to kings, princes, rajahs, archbishops — and before them, warlords and clan chiefs. We are justifiably proud of our

heritage; we ordinarily ignore the envy of others, except when it turns violent. Revolutions are intolerable and inexcusable. The aristocracy attained their positions for a reason, for only the most worthy were chosen to lead, after all. If the lower classes overthrow the aristocrats, anarchy is the sure result. One need only look at history: Can the Russians truly say their lot improved after they murdered the Romanovs?

Forgive my digression. Do not think ill of my tirades, my dear. History has always been a beloved subject to me. I pity those souls, displaced by fortune, who are ignorant of their heritage. How can one know who he is without knowing where he comes from? A man — or woman — is the sum of all who came before.

There are registries of Kinfolk lines, so none can doubt the Kinfolk's standing. It would certainly be impossible for a Garou, much less a noble Ahroun, to hold a human throne for long. We, the Kin, have often been the rulers and nobles, the better for the tribe to work through us. Occasionally, a Silver Fang marries a Kinfolk from another tribe, but certain standards must be maintained. The new spouse must be of impeccable character and lineage. Money is not the issue; many great families lost their fortunes, yet retain their nobility. Meanwhile, industrial tycoon families have become billionaires very recently, in the past hundred years or so, but that hardly makes them worthy Kinfolk. Old blood is still the best.

— Mrs. Alfred Barrows (June), genealogist, Silver Fang Kinfolk





Professor Warner's commentary:

Mrs. Barrows is a strong representative of the Silver Fang Kinfolk, Miss Corrigan, so it bodes well that she wrote to you. Once upon a time, the Silver Fangs laid claim to the best Kinfolk the world had to offer. Such Kin were often already attached to other tribes, which generally contested the issue, but until the last couple of centuries, they usually lost; the division of Britain in the wake of the Norman Conquest is but one example. Such expansion, while doing little for intertribal relations, made the Silver Fangs stronger. Now, however, they've settled down and rarely take new lines of Kinfolk. Those they choose aren't necessarily rich or powerful, but once upon a time they certainly were, the old nobility of the world. Their exclusivity has harmed them immeasurably. I have heard of several documented cases of Kinfolk with acute mental disorders, which seems all too sadly familiar.

The few wolf Kin the Fangs claim live mostly in Asia, Alaska and northwestern Canada. There are almost never "lost" wolf Kinfolk, and the Fangs diligently protect the ones that remain.

Stargazers

The self is always two. Always broken...A severed head, a heart, a nostril with a breathing hole, a breast, a bloodied womb. What are we?

— Meena Alexander, *Nampally Road*

To our minds, Professor Warner, the relationship between Garou and Kin is that sacred bond between pedagogue and pupil. It's a poor teacher who doesn't learn from her student; in this way, the knowledge of both increases. So much wisdom rests in the elders of our tribe, and yet, without the folly of the young, we would lose so much joy. I believe that we Stargazers, Kin and Garou alike, are tolerant of each others' shortcomings and grateful for our unity.

It is from our wolf brothers and sisters, however, that we gain the greatest lore. Wolf Kin don't have many years on this Earth, so they begin asking questions and seeking answers the moment their eyes and ears open. Every waking moment and, indeed, even in their dreams, they seek enlightenment. We may not understand how they have no concept of past or future, but we respect their ways. Dreams, of course, are the pathways of our souls; here rest our secret desires, fears and hopes. Think upon this the next time you wake from sleep: What easier way does Gaia have to share her own presence than through our unwaking lives?

— Yasamin Chaudhry, seer, Stargazer Kinfolk

Professor Warner's commentary:

Yasamin, as she insisted I call her, seems to be a woman of great serenity and poise. She mentioned in passing that a certain state of mind was necessary for rebirth, from which we might assume the Stargazers believe that Kin and Garou are reborn into new lives after death. Some werewolves I've spoken with do seem to have memories of past lifetimes;

they know things about places and people they've never seen or met. Yet here is a mystery I don't understand: Most Stargazers live among the people of south and central Asia, in nations with heavy populations. Considering the probable abundance of Kin among these peoples, why do so few members of this tribe find suitable mates? Why can't we Kin of the West find others like ourselves in the Far East? The tiny size of the tribe makes no sort of logical sense. Is Gaia punishing the Stargazers? Have these Garou and Kin suffered some sort of curse? I suspect some misfortune has befallen the tribe, something about which they won't (or can't) speak.

Alas that the Stargazers and their Kin are so small in number. All the other tribes could benefit from their dignity and vision.

Uktena

Our light is a voice; we make a road for the spirit to pass over.

—Dead Can Dance, "Song of the Stars"

There's an old saying that no one is an island, and we Uktena Kin take this to heart. No offense, but thanks to the Europeans claiming half the world in the 19th century, a lot of our people lost their homes and livelihoods. I'm not just talking about American Indians, but people in South America, Africa and Asia. Don't tell me that the World Wars, Korea and Vietnam were just about politics and the spread of communism. They also involved questions of territory and resources, both human and natural. Someone had to come along and help these dispossessed ones. And that's where we Uktena Kin enter the fray.

We help the tribe by looking for lost Kin and Garou alike. We search for hidden knowledge and build connections among the tribe's more disparate members. Many of us also serve as protectors and surrogate parents. And we renew the blood by having families of our own; we don't let minor cultural differences get in the way, either. My mom is from Thailand, while my dad serves as a sept councilor and tribal representative at a reservation on the West Coast. I guess some tribes would be appalled; I prefer to think I've got an advantage, drawing from two different pasts.

—Elangonel Rainwater, Uktena Kinfolk

Professor Warner's commentary:

Mr. Rainwater's words surprised me; the Uktena sound far more open and welcoming than I had guessed. Darker tales I've heard speak of half-mad Uktena Kin who join mysterious cults and perform sacrifices with Euro-Americans as victims. Likewise, I recall that in past days, internecine strife divided the tribe. I imagine the truth is somewhere between Mr. Rainwater's fair vision and the uglier rumors.

The Uktena are naturally involved in efforts to preserve the wolves of North America, primarily because they have so few wolf Kin elsewhere. I understand the occasional dingo is born with more wolf blood in Australia, due to their efforts, and I believe they have reinforced their wolf population with the blood of some "coydog" crossbreeds in

the United States. However, going too far away from wolf blood is probably a dangerous move. There have been tales of some of their newest wolf Kin being deranged as well....

Wendigo

Are we then to give up their sacred graves to be plowed for corn? Dakotas, I am for war.

—Red Cloud

The Kinfolk of the Wendigo are the last of the Pure Ones. The Uktene, though of our people, are mongrels. Our brave brothers, the Croatan, are no more. We have to be strong to overcome the Wyrmbringers, who make us forget who we are.

You doubt me. You don't speak against me, but I can see your heart is dubious. Listen: Many of the People have fallen to the lure of easy pleasures that weaken the spirit, but the Wendigo rarely follow that path. Our wolf-brothers, our tribe, they hold on to purity. They expect as much from us, and who are we to say their way is wrong? No, I tell you, our Wendigo siblings and parents and children have the right of it. They need no pretty words to convince us — we've suffered as they have.

We're members of many human tribes, and often those tribes are enemies. But the bond of Wendigo blood lessens the hostility, and allows us to unify against the common enemy: Wyrmbringers. I don't care what you say about the benefits of white culture — we didn't need their medicines before we caught their sicknesses, and we certainly didn't need their polluted food and drink before they fouled the natural bounty. Call me a throwback if you will, but I understand these lands were once called Pure, and that is not the case any longer. Someone is to blame, and the word Wyrmbringer is as accurate as any other.

—Mato-Nazin, Sioux Wendigo Kinfolk

Professor Warner's commentary:

Because of their independent natures, Wendigo Kinfolk are perhaps more factionalized than in other tribes. However, most fall into two major camps. One faction wants nothing whatsoever to do with non-Native American (read: white) culture. The anti-whites believe that to touch a Wyrmbringer or her trappings, even to watch TV, is to become tainted. They sequester themselves from modern civilization, sometimes eschewing any technology more complex than a black powder rifle. Whole villages of these Wendigo Kinfolk are tucked away in the prairies and forests of western Canada, living as their ancestors did prior to the European invasions.

The second faction makes a distinction between "white" and "Wyrm." Some among them believe that individual Wyrmbringers aren't themselves tainted, and can be useful in the struggle for their native culture's survival. The proactive faction has done more to protect their tribe, by encouraging "infiltration" into government, media and the legal system to allow the voice of their people to be heard. Unfortunately, theirs is an uphill struggle, and some succumb to the Wyrm's influence.

The Fallen

Black Spiral Dancers

The air...brought him no delightful, intriguing messages, for it was poisoned with the stench of exhaust fumes, factories, and dozens of dead, lifeless odors.

— Daniel Mannix, *The Fox and the Hound*

From Thea's notebook:

Met this morning with a woman Strangelove advised was Black Spiral Kinfolk; I was dubious, but carried my pepper spray just in case. More than anything, she struck me as someone in need of a bath and decent food. I guess I expected the whore of Babylon and got a pale, thin wretch of a woman instead. She called herself Maggie Simmons: an assumed name, I'm sure. I bought her beignets and coffee; she hardly touched the food. My impression was she might have been a substance abuser.

I asked Maggie what she did for a living, and she just laughed. People stared at us. Finally, she said, "I run a pet store. No, really, I do! We specialize in rare breeds of dogs and cats, along with unusual pets like iguanas and snakes. You should come check it out sometime."

"Well, what sorts of things do you do for, uh, your tribe?" She didn't laugh, but a weird smile played on her lips.

"Why, what sorts of things do you do for yours, hon? I give 'em what they ask for." She thought a moment. "I tote and fetch things. Got my own van for that. And I have a place for some of the folks to crash."

Then something weird happened. It was like Maggie's down-home country-girl manner changed altogether. She began talking with a sort of authority on the glories of darkness, the corruption of humans and Garou, how the Spirals and their Kin would drag us all to our fate in spite of Gaia. I swear, she sounded like some sort of preacher trying to convert me:

"I'm blessed among the Favored People, for the Dark Ones whispered to me of the Ancient Mysteries. Not all of them, no. I'm not worthy to know such things. But I know of the Wyrm, yes, and of its struggle to bring the destruction and renewal of all things. They even let me listen at the mouth of the caves, to the murmuring of Those Below! Most of our kind, they don't have any idea who we truly serve. I pity them, for it's hard to struggle in our task without even a glimpse of the higher purposes for which we strive.

"Those of my family have always served the Dark Ones. Rarely, they choose one of our own to receive the Ancient Gift. One of the priests of the Hive has looked favorably on my nephew, and I have great hopes that the Hive will remake him and teach him the Ancient Mysteries. There's no greater honor, save that of dying for the Dark Ones. Then my soul will be renewed — and all of the Ancient Mysteries shall be clear!"

I think her closing words struck me hardest of all: "Life serving the Dancers is hard, but what do you expect, girl? They're the truthservers, and truth comes at a price. There's no greater glory than to serve the destiny of the universe."

God and Gaia have mercy on those poor puppies and kittens. I feel really sick. Better not ever tell Ian about this, if I want to go out unchaperoned before I'm 50.

Professor Warner's commentary:

Miss Corrigan risked much in meeting with this clearly insane representative of the Black Spirals. Although the attitudes of all tribes' Kinfolk range from devotion to hatred, the views of Dancer Kin are decidedly more polarized, for madness touches their minds. Few actually know their own nature, or even that the werewolves exist — this "Maggie Simmons" was clearly an unusual case, for whatever reason. All the dark impulses inherent in humans come to the fore in her ilk: hate, greed, perversions of all kinds, both obvious and subtle. The "perfectly normal" college student beside you may be a closet Jeffrey Dahmer, or even worse.

Their rare wolf Kinfolk are little better. Many are actually wolf-dog crosses, unstable and aggressive from mixed blood and cruel handling. Such animals are sick, dangerous even to Dancers, and often unable to care for their own litters. I can only presume that there are many more enslaved within the Dancers' Hives — an unpleasant thought I have no desire to verify.

The Dancers often kidnap Kinfolk, rape them, steal the memories of the experience and return them to the surface. The memories of the hive return slowly, usually in horrible nightmares, even as the unexpected child grows within. If this treatment drives either mother or child mad, so much the better to the Dancers' twisted logic.

I find it curious, though, that their ranks occasionally hold fallen or disenfranchised Kin from other tribes, such as Lolani Darkmoon. And what of the pitiful yet damned creature described in Miss Corrigan's notes? How much of what she knows comes from Kin who have fled the demands of the Gaian tribes for the madness of the Wyrm?

I'm relieved to note that, after a day's rest and ministrations by her local Theurge, Miss Corrigan seems to be feeling much better. Thankfully, her brother has not been informed of this nasty expedition.

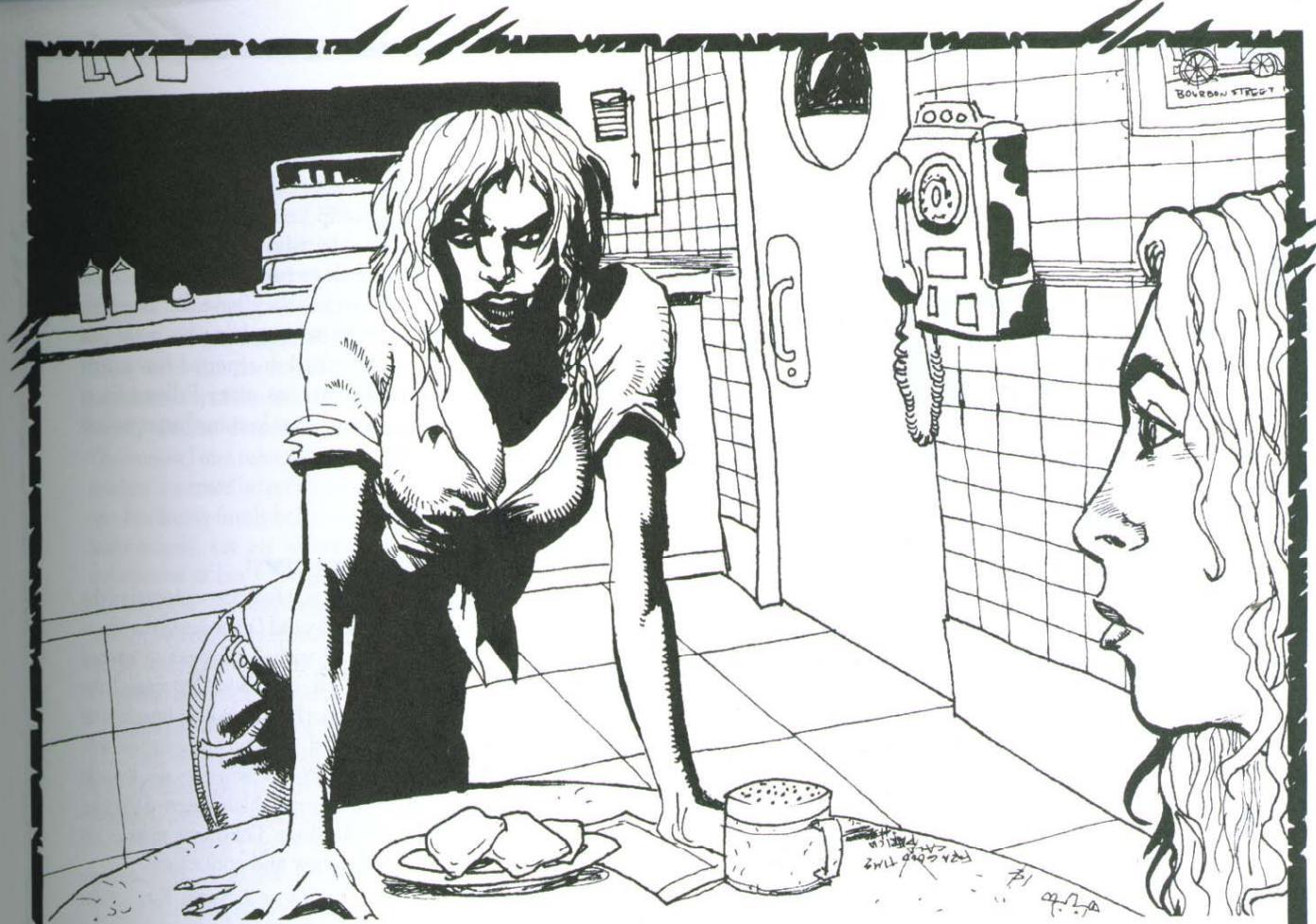
Skin Dancers

On a hot summer night, would you offer your throat to the wolf with the red rose?

— Meat Loaf, "Hot Summer Night"

From Thea's notebook:

Oddly enough, it all began here with a chance meeting, a little over a year ago. I was working the midnight shift in the ER, before I began doing home health care. I'd just graduated, and the ER job paid well. Things never got boring, that's for sure. At 3 A.M., the paramedics brought in a white male, age



20, with multiple lacerations to the torso and extremities. He'd lost a lot of blood, and from the dirt and leaves on his clothes, he looked like he'd been lying outside a fair part of the night. His driver's license named him Alec Walker, Jr. It didn't mean a thing to me, but I got a cold chill when I cut off his clothes. The lacerations looked exactly like the work of sharp teeth, deep into his flesh. While we tried to stabilize him with an infusion and the doctor sutured his wounds, I got a pretty good look at his skin: no tattoos or jewelry or anything that marked him as part of a tribe. Alec was delirious a lot of the time, too weak to struggle or say much. But after the doctor had gone to the next patient, I hung around in the area. Lucky for me, it was a slow night.

Maybe an hour passed before his eyes opened to half-mast. They were a beautiful shade of sapphire blue. He looked blearily at me — he didn't seem to be seeing clearly. His throat was parched, I guess from blood loss and painkillers, but he tried to talk anyway. I took Alec's hand and gently touched my fingers to his forehead. I probably should've tried to keep him quiet, but he seemed as determined to speak as I was to listen.

"The Ritual of Sacred Rebirth," he croaked, "is false. Mustn't listen to the Skin Dancers. Warn the others. M-my father...tried to stop it. He failed. They're so desperate, don't you see?"

"Are you Garou?" I whispered. "Or Kin? What tribe? Who should I call?"

He shook his head, once. "Not Garou. Have to warn them. The Ritual...the Wyrm. It takes five skins...five lives. Haight's idea. It turns you into one."

I gasped at hearing Haight's name. Haight was Kinfolk, now dead, thank God and Gaia. Alec was mumbling again.

"My father found the truth. The Kin followed Haight. They killed for the skins, to undergo the ritual. They Change, can't you see? They want more Kinfolk for the rite, for the hunt. They look for the unhappy ones, and jealousy makes them do it. My father wanted to stop them...he wanted forgiveness from the sept. Wish they knew." Alec sank back into his pillow, exhausted. I checked his vitals and sat there thinking until another code sounded.

The next morning, while I ran to the cafeteria for a snack, a commotion shook up the ER. Seems a pack of wild dogs somehow got through the doors...and in the confusion, Alec disappeared. I'll never forgive myself for leaving; at least I could've seen who took him. I've searched this whole year for a trace of him or these Skin Dancers he talked about, with no success. I can only hope and pray he's with his true tribe, whoever they might be.

Professor Warner's commentary:

If Alec's words were not delusional rantings, a theory suggests itself. Perhaps Haight found a means to change Kinfolk into a form of Garou using skins. That may well explain the origin of the name and the boy's mention of the "hunt" and "five skins." The number five seems to have no



particular importance, unless it is the minimum required for the ritual. More disturbing is his mention of the Wyrm. Does this ritual somehow invoke the Wyrm's power? Moreover, what is the relationship between the Black Spirals and these Skin Dancers? Alec also mentioned that they seem "desperate" for Kinfolk to participate in this ritual. Perhaps this is the only means they have for increasing their numbers? If so, it might help explain why, in the past year or two, nearly every tribe has reported Kin quietly disappearing. I suggest we alert as many Fellowships as possible about this threat and start keeping better records on the location of Kinfolk.

The Others

Professor Warner's commentary:

Most of the other Changer Kinfolk are scattered to the winds. Only with great difficulty did I even learn that these people existed; many weren't willing to speak to anyone not of their lineage. They all bear hostility toward the werewolves in some form or another; I can only imagine our forebears must have mistreated and threatened these folk and, even today, have no remorse. Needless to say, it made little difference that my tribe is one which has tried to make peace among all of Gaia's children. Therefore, most of my conclusions are based on hearsay and conjecture.

The Nuwisha, Corax, Gurahl and Bastet Kin appear closer to Garou Kin in temperament and spirit than do the others. They believe in faithful service to Gaia and their Changing relatives; the Gurahl Kin, in particular, have a reputation as being well-adjusted and strong workers. The Corax Kinfolk have a Fellowship called the Society of Swift Light, which mirrors the work of the Locksmiths. As you might expect from such mysterious creatures, Corax often keep their true natures hidden from their Kinfolk. I had a feeling some of the Kin I spoke with were, shall we say, "playing dumb"? They do prize their secrets, don't they?

Gurahl Kinfolk are rare in these times, and I can only presume that more of them are bear than human. Although once widespread, today Gurahl live primarily in the cold climes such as Canada, northern Europe and Asia, the ice fields at the north pole, and in snowcapped mountain ranges. Gurahl draw their human stock from the native people of these havens. Such Kinfolk, whether they know of their heritage or not, always feel a strong connection with Gaia. Many live alone in primitive conditions in the wilderness. Some become trail guides, park rangers or biologists. Their instinct to heal flows strong and true, and many of their Kin work as doctors, herbalists or medicine men. I suspect that the few remaining Gurahl watch over their Kinfolk, using spirits to keep track of them, seldom interfering or making their existence known.

The Bastet seem to be a people of exquisite beauty and grace. They apparently refer to their Kin as "Prides," especially the relatives who dwell close at hand. The Ananasi woman I met also spoke of respect for Gaia,

though in the same breath she remarked that Gaia wasn't the only power worth consideration.

The stranger Kinfolk in my search included those of the Ratkin, Naga and Kitsune. The Ratkin hate anyone related to the werewolves; their Kin follow suit. One did spare me a moment when I mentioned that my tribe had good relations with the Bone Gnawers.

The words of a helpful Stargazer led me to India, where I discovered that the long-vanished Naga have left a still-extant dynasty of Kinfolk. It took some time to find anyone willing to admit descent from the wereserpents, I confess. The woman I met reluctantly told me what little she knew; much of it seemed intertwined with ancient Hindu mythology. Her family firmly believes it descends from the ancient snake-people, yet my interview subject couched all her descriptions of her Changing relatives in twisted phrases and whispers. My meeting with the fox-Kin also left me baffled; indeed, I remember very little of what he said. Nor do my notes offer solid information. However, a snippet is, I suppose, better than nothing.

Alas, I could not find one of the supposed Rokea or their Kin. And when I approached a man I suspected was Mokolé Kin, he threatened to tear me apart. He relented only for a moment, when I explained I was on an errand of peace. I regret he wouldn't speak to me further, for here I sense a culture as rich and ancient as our own.

One last note, Miss Corrigan. The names and locations of these informants came to me from numerous sources; some I trust, some I don't. Keep anonymity as much as possible; I understand the nature of your search, but I would have neither my contacts nor my sources compromised. I don't doubt that we've glimpsed the merest speck of what other Kin may be among us. If we wish to explore further, and, with luck, educate our Garou relatives, the goodwill of all involved is imperative.

Bastet

Nothing personal, Professor, but I'm only telling you these things because my instincts tell me you're a good man with an important mission. The Bastet've survived and prospered only because we don't run around yowling about our heritage. So, I trust you to use some discretion and teach your relatives a little respect.

We Kin share in Selene's blessings, and our relatives, the Bastet, are fond of us. I daresay our bonds are a lot stronger than those between you and the damn werewolves. Justice, honor, respect and obedience remain paramount in our society, though oathkeeping supersedes all else. Most Bastet are loners, but that doesn't keep them and us from being a loving people; we like to touch and be touched, and we don't like penning up our affections. The Balam, for instance, are pretty devoted to their Kin, giving them any treasure and luxury they might desire. Hey, those cat food folks got it right! You can live a longer and happier life by being nice to kittens.... My tribe, the Simba, remain an

exception to the loners, because we tend to live in family groups called prides.

As far as the others, let me just mention two that you might run across. The Bagheera have a Kinfolk network kinda like those Fellowships you mentioned, so don't be surprised if you catch a whiff of our Kin helping out here and there. The Pumonca, too, have Kin scattered all over the place, who travel and fight side by side with their furry relatives. Bet you Kin can't boast of deeds like that! Sorry, it's just not the same to say your werewolf pals let you come along.

Here's a dab of history: As with most tribes of the Changing Breeds, our Bastet forebears bred with the local peoples. They once flourished throughout Europe and Asia, as well as Africa; your wolf tribes did well to be wary of my ancestors' claws. But finally, humans and werewolves drove most of us south to Africa or east into Asia. It might have meant the end for our cat-Kin, but luckily, my people are survivors. With the expansion of the European powers into our lands again, some of the Bastet took a few of you werewolf Kinfolk for their own. I understand that infuriated a few werewolves in Russia, Scandinavia and the British Isles, but that's a minor price for your folk to pay, considering what we — well, my ancestors, anyway — have suffered.

— Serwa Sisal, Simba Kinfolk

Professor Warner's commentary:

It's truly unfortunate that even the Kinfolk of the other Changing Breeds continue to despise all Garou for the deeds of their werewolf ancestors. I'm sure I need not identify the numerous inaccurate assumptions that Ms. Sisal makes regarding our relations with the Garou; not surprisingly, the families of the other shapeshifters also seem to be raised on a steady diet of hate for werewolves. As you'll see, Ms. Sisal's opinions are hardly unique among the Changing Kin, although not one of the Kinfolk I spoke to admitted to ever seeing a werewolf. A bitter family legacy indeed.

The Bagheera Fellowship mentioned is certainly an anomaly among Bastet Kin. The Bastet that remain are quite clannish, and they have a poor record of cooperation. What I gather from various reports is that the Bastet mostly leave their Kin to their own devices and return to them only now and again, when the fancy suits them. Consequently, Bastet Kin seem as independent as their relatives — which is both a boon and hindrance to them.

Nuwisha

Believe it or not, we Nuwisha Kin are your cousins...removed a few dozen times. I heard my daddy say we taught your Garou ancestors more than a few tricks. Nowadays, seems we rarely have much to do with you all, except for the tribe called the Uktena. More's the pity, 'cause y'all seem okay to me. A little stuffy and pompous maybe, but we'd change that quick enough.

You know what people call red wolves? Well, I'm sure there's probably a few of those creatures that *are* pure wolf; I heard about them breeding projects in the Appalachians and stuff. But truth to tell, many of the pups you call red wolves have a lot of coyote blood in 'em. Actually, I've heard tell that sometimes our coyote Kin breed with dogs too; what pops out in a month or two are these critters called coydogs. They've got the best of dog and coyote Kin blood in 'em; they're smart, strong and fast. A few stupid whities have tried to make pets of coydogs. Goes to show you just how dumb they are, doesn't it?

As for our own people, we see them less often these days. They'll sometimes show up for a party or festival, but that's about it. Guess they've found something in the world of spirits that's more interesting than this mortal coil, eh?

— Woody Blackhawk, Nuwisha Kinfolk

Corax

We're curious creatures, just like our winged kin. They can't be everywhere at once, so they turn to us. We watch, we gather info, and then let them know what we see.

Our Corax traditions are a lot more practical about Kinfolk than you wolf-people. The Ravenkind may pick anyone, human or raven, to bear the sacred egg that makes them Corax. But they never, ever choose anyone on a whim — I dunno why. High standards, I guess. The Ravenkind usually select Kinfolk simply because they're the best. Not just Corax Kinfolk, of course; we've had some interesting relationships, particularly with Garou, if you get my drift. Keeps our ties with the northern tribes close. Hey, you didn't think all that stuff about Odin's ravens, Hugen and Munin, was just a *story*, did you?

— Eric Kroll, Corax Kinfolk

Ratkin

You got about two seconds before I chase you outta here, old man, friend of Bone Gnawers or not. Because you damn werewolves and that bitch Gaia really screwed us over. We used to be the kings of the cities — we were rich and powerful, and we ruled over those ancient places like Babylon and such. Now we have to hide in the dark, and it's usually cold and hungry in the back streets. All thanks to the Garou.

But it's taught us to be faithful to our own. I bet us family of the Ratkin get a helluva lot more respect than do you, no matter if you *do* live up where the sun shines. So the next time one of your precious Garou siblings screws you two ways to Sunday, remember what I said. Now piss off!

Note from Professor Warner: I'm sorry, Miss Corrigan, I didn't even have a chance to get his name. Perhaps Mr. Fixer might have more luck?

Gurahl

My totem spirit is Gurahl, called Bear in your tongue. I venerate Gurahl as my ancestors have since the beginning.

The bear spirits guide me and protect me from the wolf spirits and the strangers. Once, strangers came to my valley. They wanted to have the valley for themselves, to take the trees and scar the land. I would not let them, for this valley belongs to Gurahl. We fought, and they hurt me with their fire. I called upon Gurahl for aid. She came, and with great wrath killed the strangers. Then she took the form of a woman and carried me to my cave and healed my wounds. I thanked her, sang the songs of power she taught me long ago and watched her return to her forest.

— Duran-nah, Dreamspeaker, Gurahl Kinfolk

Ananasi

I have to admit, mister, I never saw anyone of Wolf's blood come callin' on anyone of my blood before. Way I've always heard it, your Garou friends see the Ananasi and us, their families, as corrupt, all reeking of the Wyrm and such. I guess they don't realize — though maybe you're here 'cause you finally caught on — that we know about Gaia too, even though she's not the only power on the block.

I'll tell you that we Kin live in family groups with the Ananasi: not exactly like one of your septs, but close to it. We all work together for the good of the leaders and our families. I won't go so far as to say there's undying loyalty, but we do have a lot of respect for each other. The Lady's blood is getting rarer and rarer these days, and we have no friends among the Bête, not even the Ratkin! So we stick together as much as possible. I know that isn't always the way of Spider, but our Ananasi cousins, they can't afford to be picky any more.

— Maiba Mullin, Ananasi Kinfolk

Mokolé

Were I as capable as my ancestors, I'd kill you now and never spare a second thought. Other Kin of the Bête, such as the Corax or the Nuwisha, share our respect and understanding of Gaia's memories. But you werewolves took life from us. You'd have exterminated all my people if you'd had the chance. You wish to know about Mokolé Kin? Know this, then: The eggs your forebears destroyed carried fruit of both Changers and Kin. No atonement can replace those lost children. Heed my warning and seek knowledge of us no further!

— Prokop Radislawski, Mokolé Kinfolk

Professor Warner's commentary:

In the legends of my tribe, the Mokolé were apparently entrusted with the "memory of Gaia." Small wonder that even their Kin still feel anger over the War of Rage so keenly.

Naga

The full tale of our Naga ancestors, Professor Warner, coils around millennia of history. Thousands of years ago, the snake folk chose the young sons and daughters of our nobility as mates. Power cleaves to power, you see, so only

the best and brightest would do for the Naga. We who claim this descent consider our heritage honorable beyond measure; rare it is today that the blood of the ancient and wise flows among humankind. The few Naga Kinfolk still live in India today; most become spiritual leaders, mystics or recluses.

Have I ever seen a Naga? Well, no, not exactly. At least, I don't think so. My great-great-grandmother, she claimed to have seen one's shadow once, when she was just a child. In my family's library, we have bright paintings of our Naga ancestors. And with us Kin, there's something about our eyes, or a tilt of our heads or the tones of our skin that sets us apart. It's hard to explain, I admit, but no less believable than when you tell me of people in your land who change into wolves! Within us, perhaps more so than you, dwell feelings, fleeting dreams, hazy visions. We simply know we're Kin to the Naga. No more proof is needed.

— Supriya Patel, Naga Kinfolk

Kitsune

Like our blessed fox-folk family members, we come from Japan, though today you may see our kind in small numbers all over the world. Except for times of mating and celebration, we do not live together in packs as do your people; the revered Kitsune stand apart from both their human and fox brethren in power and spirit. It is not fitting we should live together, for we have no bonds save ancient oaths and a few drops of shared blood, more precious to us than any human notions of kinship. Those of us who know our ancestry prefer our solitude, as do the Nine-Tails themselves. When they need us, they seek us out, and we join with them willingly, then go our separate ways. Now, does this satisfy your curiosity? I warn you; do not spill these bean curds to any of the humans. If you do, the Kitsune will deal with you first and me second. Never underestimate their cunning, wisdom and foresight. They are always watching.

— Yukio Masabi, Kitsune Kinfolk

Rokea

Note from Professor Warner:

Miss Corrigan, again I apologize for lack of information on the Rokea and their Kin. Did I mention that a Ragabash told me of their existence? Perhaps it was a jest after all.

The Lost Tribes

Bunyip

Professor Warner's commentary:

The human Kinfolk of the Bunyip, the Australian Aborigines, are still around, although in tiny numbers. They haven't forgotten their Changing cousins, even though the Bunyip are forever lost in the Dreamtime. The thylacine (also known as the Tasmanian tiger or Tasmanian wolf), clings to existence in hidden enclaves and is presumed





extinct by the bulk of the scientific community. Thus far, no Bunyip have ever been reborn.

(I must confess, I was originally surprised that the werewolves considered the Bunyip Garou at all. Given how far removed the thylacine is from the wolf, how could the Bunyip be of the same Changing Breed as ones with placental wolf Kin? And yet, my Garou contacts flatly state that the Bunyip shared the common purpose of all werewolves, and were Garou in Gaia's eyes from their beginning. Truly, much more than biology determines who is and who isn't a shapeshifter.)

Croatan

Professor Warner's commentary:

Originally, these Native Americans lived all along the eastern seaboard. After the Croatan died in a heroic battle against the Wyrm, the Wendigo and Uktena claimed their orphan Kinfolk, many of whom died from diseases and war with the Wyrmbringers. Some tales hint that a tiny few of their Kin remain, and while nearly none of these spiritual orphans know of their heritage, they sometimes sense spiritual guardians at hand in their most trying moments. Considering the weight of evidence against even the slightest sign of the Croatan since the tribe's sacrifice, I am disinclined to believe these rumors.

White Howlers

Many songs have the Fenrir sung for their fallen comrades in war, the White Howlers. Of all the tribes, their blood alone was worthy to mingle with ours. The Howlers had the guts to take the battle to the enemy's home, and for that we salute them. We welcomed to our lodges the few Kinfolk who escaped the taint, and soon, they became valued family members.

My young son has had dreams of highland battles and snow-white wolves. My wife, a Theurge, says it's a sign that the spirit of a Howler ancestor watches and blesses him. She says it's a good omen, and I take it as such.

— Heinrich Rosenblatt, Get of Fenris Kinfolk

Professor Warner's commentary:

After the descent of the Howlers into darkness, their Kinfolk...changed. Only a handful escaped; indeed, they were the ones who fled to their allies and warned them of what had happened. The White Howler Kinfolk mingled with Get and Fianna Kinfolk, and so passed away as a distinct group. But the blood, though mixed, still remains in a few, and once in a rare while, a genetic "throwback" to the Howlers is born among the Fianna. Yet these folk are no longer White Howlers in any sense that counts. Despite what the Nine-Tail Kin may have insinuated, blood alone is not enough to determine tribal ancestry. Think upon the Black Furies a moment, Miss Corrigan. Why is it that they have no male children among their ranks? Surely, on occasion, a male werewolf child is born amongst them. Yet never have I seen one male Garou call himself a Black Fury.

and live! No, I believe they send these young men to live with other tribes, such as my own, where for all intents and purposes they become members of their new tribe, despite whose womb they came from. So it is with the White Howlers, in my opinion. Perhaps White Howler blood does run amongst Kin and maybe even Garou. But these long-lost people have no spirit denizen to guide them, no matter what their heritage. Under the auspices of Stag, Fenris or whomever, any Kin or Garou who *may* have White Howler blood is still a white-furred member of whatever tribe he's born into, be it Get, Fianna or Bone Gnawer. We do their memory no honor to insinuate otherwise.

Kinfolk Fellowships

Time to make a stand.

— Bel Canto, "Didn't You Know It?"

From Thea's notebook:

Fellowships are, quite simply, groups of Kinfolk who work together for a common purpose. Some Fellowships are exclusive to certain tribes; the Silvertree Genealogical Society, for example, allows only Kin or Garou of the Silver Fangs (and the rare guest, like me, *gasp!*) access to their records. The Locksmiths and Viatopia, on the other hand, encourage membership from all tribes. Some are simply small groups of friends in a local area; others are highly organized and mobile. While some Fellowships, like the Black Eagle, have membership requirements based on both tribe and skill, others have open-door policies. Generally, they all have one common goal: Keep the lines of communication among werewolves and Kin strong worldwide.

Professor Warner's commentary:

The open Fellowships represent a danger, though I hate to admit it. Spies from the government and who-knows-what may be able to join undetected. Thus far, we have been lucky, but it's just a matter of time before someone we don't want sneaks in. It's not that I want to close ranks by any means; I just wish we paid a little closer attention to who came in from the cold.

Widdershins

Widdershins is a Celtic folk band of Fianna Kin. Yeah, yeah, I know you think we're a dime a dozen. I'd like to believe we're a little more special than most. We got a start in New Orleans just a few years ago when the Conneely brothers, Padraig and Aidan — they're twins — talked a couple friends into playing for fun. It wasn't long before we enjoyed our first real, paying performance at the Gallows Pole in New Orleans. An album contract and some measure of fame allowed us the freedom to quit our day jobs and travel. So, that's where the Fellowship idea comes in.

We're just one of several bands that form a network for Kin and Garou alike. As we play, we relay messages up and down the East and Gulf coasts, with occasional forays as far

north as Vancouver. Any venue is guaranteed to include folks of the tribe, and to be honest, some of the fae folk have also made appearances. Or so I've been told by more than one handsome rake trying to find a warm place to rest!

Since the time they were knee-high, Padraig and Aidan were raised on tales about the Troubles; put a bit of a yearning to help out in their heads, it did. They didn't find out about the Garou until they'd finished high school and were working a summer job on a cousin's land in Louisiana. That's when they had the misfortune to disturb a mother bear and her cubs. Out of nowhere (or so it seemed to the boys), this monstrous shape jumped between them and the bear; the cubs scuttled up a palmetto while the mother bear tried to lead the attacker away. Padraig and Aidan'd never before seen their sweet and pretty cousin turned into a dire wolf! It was enough to make 'em drain most of a hip flask...and listen in fascination as Caoilte gave a lesson on the Garou and the Fianna. While they've never given up their childhood fantasy of bringing some kind of peace to Ireland, the brothers focus most of their energy on Widdershins' information service these days.

— Maire O'Dwyer, manager, Fianna Kinfolk

The Gaia Network

Professor Warner's commentary:

The Gaia Network and its subsidiary groups, such as GYN (Gaia Youth Network), form the single largest Kinfolk Fellowship at present. The Network helps us keep tabs on Garou and Kin around the world, formulate policy and serve as an advisory body to all Children of Gaia septs. While Kin hold most of the staff positions, a few Garou pitch in on a regular basis.

Some among GYN are proposing an alliance with the Locksmiths; the GYN members complain that many of the Kinfolk in the Network still live in the '60s and need to get up to speed on modern technology. I'm more in favor of the alliance than the technology, but I'm probably one of the "old farts" they joke about.

My fear is the younger members of the Network take trust to extremes. I, too, believe in love and peace; after all, a scholar's profession hopefully builds freedom. But I also want to urge caution in accepting members without at least a song or a letter of introduction. We've built too much for a rotten apple to spoil it all.

The Silvertree Genealogical Society

From Thea's notebook:

Professor Warner's commentary:

I cannot begin to describe the sheer volume of materials this organization maintains, Miss Corrigan. If you can gain access, and I suspect that Mrs. Barrows would be accommodating, make time for a visit. Silver Fang or not, there is something wonderful about reading words written centuries ago.

Mrs. Barrows herself is an interesting figure. The marriage of June Richmond to Alfred Barrows, an advisor to the

Silver Fang councils, was the social event of 1961. Even I received an invitation. The lovely bride could trace her ancestry to Norman France, while the groom's lineage boasted the noblest English blood. The Barrows' marriage was, first and foremost, an arrangement of business and propriety, but the gentleman and his wife were quite fond of each other.

Mr. Barrows died in 1987, after a devastating Black Spiral attack on his sept. Mrs. Barrows found herself well settled for the future, but alone for the first time in her life. Over the years, researching her family's history had been an amusing diversion; it became the work that sustained her after her husband's death. She used a small portion of her many investments to found the Silvertree Genealogical Society in 1989, mostly as a service to Silver Fangs, but also as a resource for any Garou and Kin who wanted to trace their lineage. Mrs. Barrows rules the Society with a firm but benevolent hand; she'll often hire young people as summer interns and provide them with room,

User's Guide for Guests: Silvertree Genealogical Society

Dear Patron,

Thank you for your interest in the Silvertree Genealogical Society. Please be sure to sign our guest book before you leave. If you have any questions, do feel free to ask the attendant in the main salon for assistance. Please note: No packages, parcels or pens are allowed in the archives! We will be happy to supply you with paper and pencils upon request. Complimentary lockers are available for your belongings.

The archives contain records dating back approximately 600 years. Most are in microfiche format (directions on reader). A few rare documents are preserved under glass; we ask that you request assistance if you wish to examine them. For the ease of researchers, we also have family trees available on CD-ROM in the computer room. Most patrons find this is a good place to start indexing names, as the computer system is quite fast and accurate. From there, you might wish to explore deeds, diaries, wills and other legal documents in the microfiche. We index documents according to date and name; a master index is also available on CD-ROM, should you come prepared for a direct name search.

Thank you for your patronage. We hope your search with the Silvertree Genealogical Society will be very fruitful.

Sincerely yours,
Mrs. Alfred Barrows, Archivist

board and a stipend. You might mention this program to some of the younger ones who need a short-term job.

The Locksmiths

From Thea's notebook:

(How did Strangelove know I had a brother????)

Message-ID:

<91919889.036.EST.strangelove@unowhre.fltwrld.com>

MIME: 2.3

Content-type: text/plain

Content-transfer-encoding: STRANGEbit

Okay, Thea, if you're reading this, it means you've done something right. Welcome to the Locksmiths! You can also check out our private newsgroup at alt.kin.com, or our nifty Web site at www.luvthebomb.kin.sellers.com. Don't worry; not just anyone can get into it, and we don't show up on Web searches (wink).

What is The Locksmiths exactly? The short answer is a Glass Walker Kinfolk network, awesomely connected on the Internet. Both Kinfolk and Garou from all over the world communicate with us to boast of pack exploits, offer warnings about Pentex and generally keep in touch.

Our latest projects, which I'm rather proud of, are two grand databases; a lot of folks maintain them, not just us Glass Walkers. One database is a listing of all known tainted products; the other contains all known companies connected with Pentex. We're constantly updating both lists with information supplied by Glass Walkers and Kin-folk worldwide.

You might be interested in a new project I'm cooking up: TaleTime. It's an interactive Web site with lots of cool graphics and all kinds of legends about the werewolves and Kinfolk. I'll bet you'd be happy to hear that at least one of the tales I've got ready deals with a certain Fianna who just happens to be your brother. The Get Kin also have some rockin' tales ready for the site.

Well, that's about it. Hope to catch you "Web crawling" sometime!

strangelove

The Sisterhood

From Thea's notebook:

The Sisterhood isn't just for Kinfolk; it's a union of Furies and Kin, male and female, human and wolf, that works for the common weal of the tribe. That tends to shock a lot of people! The tribe would have been extinct without male Kin, and many of them hold prominent positions in the Sisterhood. In the past, we've acted as a "freedom" train to rescue condemned prisoners and slaves. Some among us are *strega*, witches; others are administrators, teachers or healers. And all of us heed the call of

battle against despoilers of every sort. While we had our beginnings in Europe, the Sisterhood now stretches around the globe.

Kinfolk are vital to the Sisterhood; they help strengthen ties with both the human and animal domains. Moreover, many of our two-legged brothers and sisters are taking part in an important project: the purchase of Fury lands and sacred sites. Our most serious work is ongoing in central Asia, eastern Africa and South America, lands that lie in danger of Wyrm-taint or destruction. Most members of the Sisterhood engaged in the project are using their own funds, which are now dwindling. The work, though, is far from done.

Me? Yes, I followed the Fury tradition of taking a new name from your role models — in my case, Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, and anarchist Emma Goldman. I've roamed a lot, worked on a cargo ship and lived a long time in Uganda as a medic and teacher. I guess I kinda think the world's my home; I've got to take care of it, even if no one else does.

— Audre-Emma Rich, Black Fury Kinfolk

Diatopia

From Thea's notebook:

(I don't believe this guy; it seems almost too perfect to be true! Means it probably is...see Strangelove's attached note.)

Dear Ms. Corrigan,

Thanks so much for your letter inquiring about the Viatopia Enterprise. It's not every day I get inquiries, so

forgive me if I wax poetic! Viatopia, as you already seem to know, is a sort of "homeland" for Kinfolk in southern Minnesota. We aren't picky about who lives here, either; I'm from a Shadow Lord family, but we have representatives from most of the werewolf tribes. I bought the original property, but it's since expanded threefold, thanks to the other members of the community. Everyone pays a share of land upkeep, volunteers time for outdoor or administrative work and attends the town meetings. We have a council of officials that sets policy; the jobs are up for election every four years, with no term limit. Viatopia is not yet self-sustaining; most of us have outside jobs, though that is rapidly changing. We now have our own school and clinic, along with several prosperous businesses. Our only protective covenant is that residents must be Kinfolk or Garou; I don't really like that "exclusion" policy, but thus far we haven't had a problem with it.

Our goals are relatively simple: We want full acceptance in Garou society. This includes representation at moots, the right to refuse dangerous jobs and reproductive freedom. I realize that the laws may change quicker than the de facto behavior of most werewolves, but at least it's a start. We have several supporters among the Children of Gaia, Black Furies and Bone Gnawers; the more "traditional" tribes are taking a little longer to convince. If you know of anyone interested among your own relatives, I'd be glad to make a presentation. I have a traveling "show" that's pretty convincing, if I do say so myself!

To: thearn@hmehlth.no.org
From: strangelove@unowhre.fltrwld.com
Subj: This Weird Shadow Lord Bastard

Hey Thea,

I think I got you some skinny on this Viatopia twerp, though I gotta give the guy credit for having a top-notch system. Took more than an hour to crack.

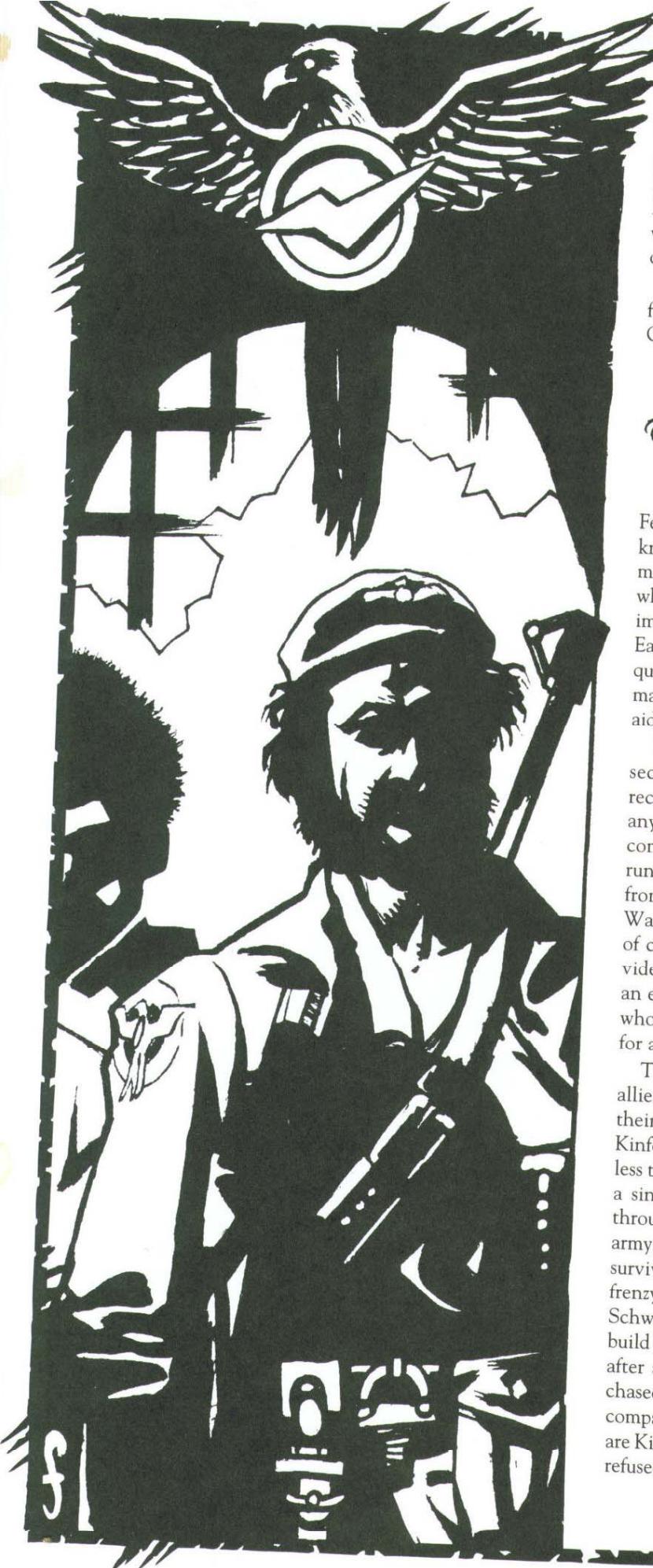
This Preston guy grew up in Michigan. Word has it that his father died at the hands of Pentex; his mother bore six Kinfolk daughters before giving birth to Adam and dying in the process. Coincidence? Who knows? But it seems that his immediate family was surprisingly sexist, and they heaped a lot of hoping on the shoulders of this "son of a great warrior." But as little Adam approached manhood and didn't Change, he felt himself slipping down in importance and value — big surprise.

I found some rumors that Adam was sorely tempted to dump the werewolves and just live like a normal, ignorant human. Instead, he worked his way through school (between obligatory jobs for his family) and became a sociologist; I got a fax of his vita if you wanna see it, and

a fiche of his thesis wouldn't be hard to copy. That's where I got much of my dirt. Anyway, Adam studied the structure of Garou and Kinfolk society and decided there was a better way. After reading works by W.E.B. DuBois, Gandhi, Orwell and a host of others, Adam decided the best way for Kinfolk to get on equal footing with Garou society was to separate from it. Only when they found their own path undirected, Adam said, could the Kinfolk ever hope to find a place in the Garou worldview. He drew up plans for Viatopia and began recruiting followers and financial backers.

By all accounts, this guy's a real sweetheart. Adam's personal charm and straightforward manner attracted a number of supporters among several tribes. He appealed to unhappy Kin, as well as those who still wanted to be a part of Garou society. Within the next five years, Adam hopes to put Viatopia on a self-supporting basis. For now, he relies on contributions from members and on his own meager investments. Too bad I don't trust him one tiny byte.

Later, babe. You owe me a good tale for this one.
strangelove



The practices of some great leaders guide our path. For inspiration, we look to people who have achieved freedom and equality. Our list of heroes includes Spartacus, Dr. Martin Luther King, Harriet Tubman, Gandhi, the Pankhursts, Susan B. Anthony and Alice Walker. It's time we Kin stopped being second-class citizens and stood up for our rights. Viatopia is my vision of that dream.

Please don't hesitate to write or call again if you have further questions. Perhaps you'd care to visit sometime? Our door is always open.

Sincerely yours,

Adam Preston, Founder, Viatopia

The Black Eagle

Professor Warner's commentary:

The Black Eagle is an elite mercenary team of Get of Fenris Kinfolk. Among paramilitary organizations that know of it, the Black Eagle is considered to be the best. Its members pride themselves on their record of striking anywhere in the world in less than 48 hours and performing the impossible in slightly more time. Whoever hires the Black Eagle had best be willing to pay exorbitant rates, answer all questions and accept refusal without protest. In truth, the main reason an Eagle commander refuses a mission is if it aids the goals of the Wyrm.

Its missions are many and varied. Raids, extractions, security consultation (strictly for Garou), training, reconnaissance...the Black Eagle will undertake just about any small-unit operation. Gerald Schwartz, the battalion commander, seldom ventures into the field anymore. He runs the logistics and negotiations of the Eagle operations from his Montana headquarters and a small warehouse in Washington D.C.; "facilities" are also located in a number of countries around the world. Total membership is divided up into two or three companies of 25 soldiers, with an extensive network of support personnel and contacts who supply anything a combat team could possibly need for a mission.

These Kinfolk take pride in not relying on their Garou allies to get the job done. However, the Eagles readily assist their Get cousins when asked. Schwartz takes his role as Kinfolk "war-leader" quite seriously and pushes his team no less than he drives himself. As I've heard it, he can't name a single Garou relative, but he's still Kin through and through. He met up with a Get of Fenris during a stint in the army, and didn't break down with the Delirium — he even survived a punch or two — when his friend went into a frenzy. Discovering the werewolves was a blessing for Schwartz. He got an honorable discharge and went on to build his small savings with work in the reserves. Finally, after about a dozen years of careful investment, he purchased some land in Montana and started the mercenary company. He handpicks all members, who, by necessity, are Kinfolk (mostly Get of Fenris). His soldiers have never refused a mission he's offered.

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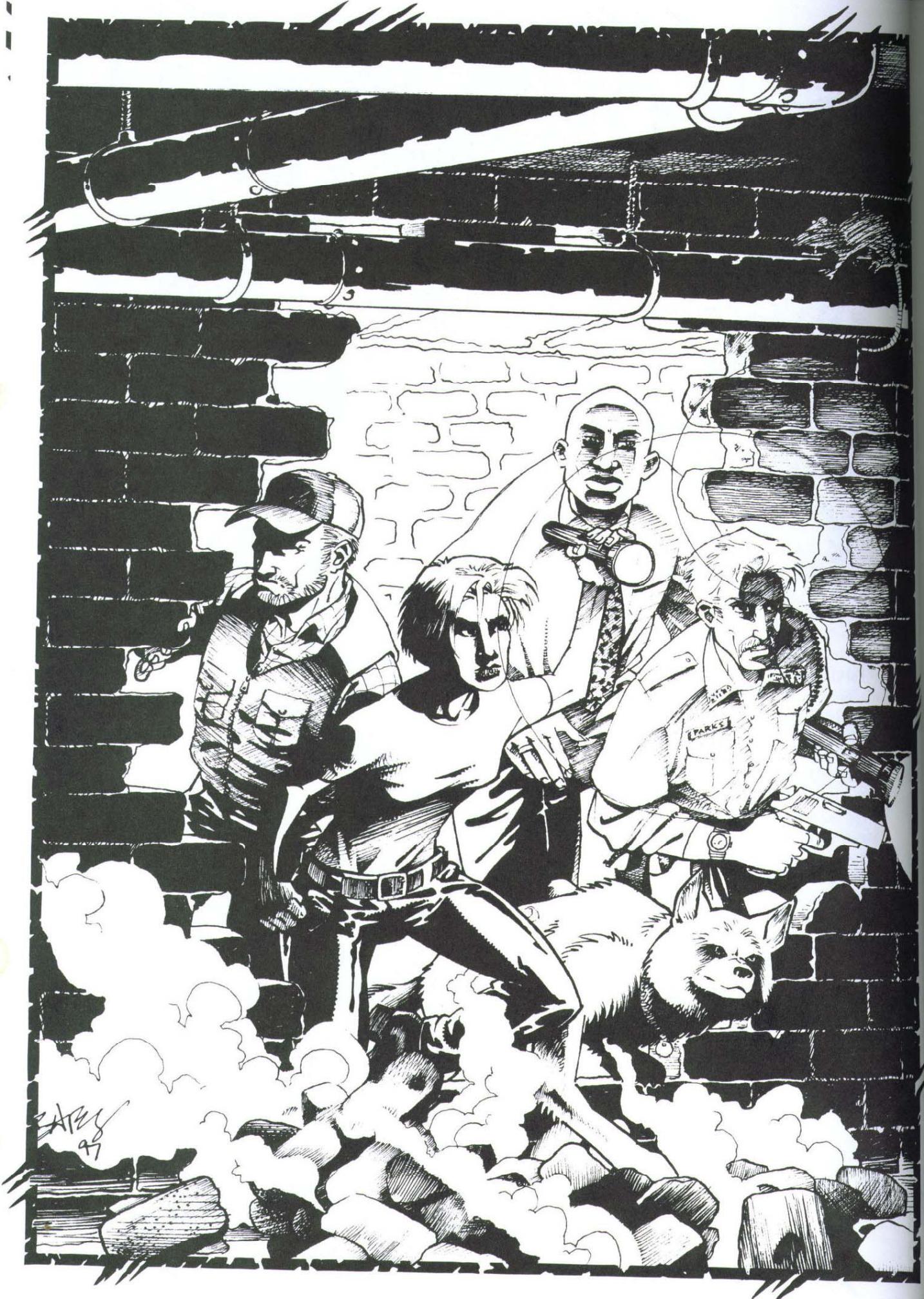
For Get employers, the Eagle's fees are minimal, usually just enough to cover transportation and equipment; Schwartz sometimes even funds these missions out of his own pocket. For other tribes, the price is steep, though patrons get what they pay for. Non-Garou can expect to pay through the nose for results (which are, nonetheless, guaranteed). Their training compound encompasses about 2,500 acres, including a small airstrip, and Schwartz's house is a state-of-the-art arsenal. It's rumored that Schwartz has friends in the NSA who keep federal eyes turned away from the Eagle and its "activities." There's also a rumor that he does them the occasional favor in return for this carte blanche, but my source was understandably reticent on this topic.

Although Schwartz relies nowadays on his younger protégés, he still enjoys planning and teaching new recruits. The man is hard on them, but even harder on himself. Not having a bona fide Garou family spurs him more than any overlord's whip.

NAMID (North American Indian Decree)

Professor Warner's commentary:

"Namid," in the Chippewa tongue, means "star dancer," a well-chosen name for what seems to be an excellent cause. NAMID is chiefly a Wendigo Kinfolk organization, though it receives help from Uktena Kin, too. It has several arms, including a scholarship program exclusively for Native Americans in graduate schools, a network of attorneys, a legal defense fund and a political action committee. Less admirable is NAMID's unsanctioned militant wing, full of brash, angry young radicals who disregard "ineffective" political (and legal) methods. These young ones play up intertribal rivalries among werewolves and humans; I've even read that they encourage competition among the wolf packs. I can't pretend to understand their anger and frustration at the poverty of the reservations and the loss of rights. Yet, neither can I condone their violence and destruction. I pray the wiser heads in NAMID put a quick halt to the more reckless members of the Fellowship, before it's too late.



Chapter Two: Creating Characters

Kinfolk Characters

Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf.

— Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*

In these, the last days of the werewolves, there simply aren't enough Garou to get the job done. More and more, Gaia's sacred duties are being passed to Kinfolk, simply because there's nobody else to do the job. It's a terrible time for the shapeshifters—and yet, it's a time when the Kinfolk may finally have their chance to shine.

This chapter gives details for making up Kinfolk characters, for both player and Storyteller use. It includes new Abilities, Backgrounds, Numina, Merits and Flaws that are unique to Kin. *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* should be close at hand for reference; *The Werewolf Players Guide* contains information on Natures and Demeanors, as well as additional Abilities, though it's not absolutely required for running a Kinfolk chronicle. Storytellers and players might also find the following books useful for specialized equipment and Traits: *Project Twilight*, *The Hunters Hunted*, *Halls of the Arcanum*, *Ascension's Right Hand*, *World of Darkness: Combat*, *World of Darkness: Sorcerer*, *Ways of the Wolf* (reprinted in *Werewolf Chronicles*, Volume 2), and even *Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth* and *Freak Legion* (if you're quite sick and twisted).

Remember that Kinfolk are mortal! As a consequence, players get fewer beginning points to construct their characters. However, they also receive more freebie points with which to give the character some hope of survival (and the chance to purchase some Traits that set them slightly apart).

Begin creating the character by thinking about who she is and what she does. What does she look and smell like? Is she a physically adept person or are her strengths more cerebral? What tribe is her Garou family? Is she human or wolf? Much of the material here focuses on human characters, but players should feel free to play wolf Kinfolk in certain settings. A wolf in downtown Chicago needs a good reason for being with her Garou relatives, though, lest she end up in the zoo drugged senseless!

Most important, consider the character's relationship to the werewolves. Is she a supportive member of the community? Or is she resentful and bitter? What have the Garou done, for good or ill, to make her feel this way? Is she happy with her lot or jealous of her Garou relations? Does she even know the werewolves exist, or is she going to be drawn into great happenings purely by chance? More than any other facet of the character's personality, her ties to the Garou shape the scenarios surrounding her and help determine the flavor of the chronicle.

Character Creation

Step One: Personality

Choose Concept, Tribe, Breed, Relation, Nature and Demeanor.

Possible concepts for Kinfolk include: architect, archaeologist, anthropologist, lab tech, nature guide, outdoor writer, pack alpha, farmer, executive, environmental attorney, photographer, programmer, vet tech, philosopher, outcast wolf, police officer, bounty hunter, ecologist, zoo-born wolf, biologist, or forester.

Relation describes your family connections to the Garou. "Daughter of Theurge" is one example.

Step Two: Select Attributes

Prioritize the three categories: Physical, Social, Mental (6/4/3). See below for rules on wolf Kin.

Step Three: Select Abilities

Prioritize the three categories: Talents, Skills, Knowledges (11/7/4).

Wolf Kin characters have a different set of abilities with which to work. They should allot their smallest portion to Knowledges and consider additional Knowledge Abilities to be found in **The Werewolf Players Guide**. See the notes below on playing wolf Kinfolk.

Step Four: Select Advantages

Choose Backgrounds (5). Kinfolk may select from Allies, Contacts, Equipment, Favors, Mentor, Pure Breed, Renown and Resources. See below for details and restrictions.

Optional: Merits and Flaws are optional advantages/disadvantages. Purchase Merits with freebie points; Flaws selected add to the Freebie Point pool, up to a maximum of seven points.

Step Five: Finishing Touches

Record Willpower (3)

Spend freebie points (21). You cannot purchase Gifts with freebie points; you must acquire them through play and spending experience points.

Trait	Cost
Attributes	5 per dot
Abilities	2 per dot
Backgrounds	1 per dot
Willpower	1 per dot
First Numina Type	7 per dot
Second Numina Type	14 per dot
Merits	variable

Numina

Numina come in three forms: Psychic Phenomena (such as Telepathy), Hedge Magic (folk wizardry) and True Faith (spiritual belief that lends power). For further details, including specific paths of magic and abilities, see **World of Darkness: Sorcerer** (the reference work for Hedge Magic), as well as **Ascension's Right Hand**, **The Hunters Hunted**, **The Quick and the Dead**, **The Inquisition** or **Project Twilight**. See below for Numina available to Kinfolk characters.

Wolf Kinfolk

Building wolf Kin characters works a little differently from constructing human ones. Allot the usual points in Attributes (6/4/3 in Physical, Social and Mental Traits), but distribute the largest portion among Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity, Stamina). The Manipulation Trait should be the lowest among the Social Attributes. For Abilities (Talents, Skills and Knowledges), use a 7/3/1 distribution, taking the lowest number in Knowledges. Another option is to take three points in Knowledges, though it makes survival a little more tricky. Alertness, Athletics, Brawl, Dodge and Stealth are excellent choices for Abilities. Wolf Kin may have the same number of Backgrounds (5) as other Kin, but, as a group, they are under the same restrictions as Red Talons (see below). Wolf Kinfolk make up for these cuts by gaining a Strength +1 bite attack, as well as a last-ditch Strength -1 claw. Moreover, they subtract two from all Perception difficulties involving smell and hearing.

New Talent

Intuition

You get good hunches from time to time, and you've come to trust them. Sometimes, you can't explain why you know something or how you jump from a jumbled set of facts to a brilliant conclusion, but the instinct serves you well. Intuition reflects your aptitude for good guessing and gut feelings. This Talent is not a psychic ability, but rather an inborn "sixth sense." Intuition may let the character know if someone is lying, or it may allow her to pick up on a lead from a seemingly minute set of clues. Storytellers can also use Intuition to convey information to the players.

- Novice: Your instincts often put you on the right trail.
- Practiced: You've learned to follow your first answer.
- Competent: You always know when something's afoot.
- Expert: Not only do you know when something's wrong, you know who's responsible.
- Master: Your insights are so abrupt and precise, you scare yourself.

New Knowledge

Bureaucracy

The human world thrives on red tape. This Ability gives you the power to cut through the mire, get quick answers and see results. Bureaucracy allows you to deal with government agencies, as well as to run your own organization. Combined with the Contacts Background, you can accomplish a lot and be a very effective force for Kinfolk and werewolves.

- Student: Still a babe in the concrete jungle, you are, nonetheless, a good planner, and you can find local government offices in the phone book.
- College: You run a tight ship as an accomplished amateur, and you know who to call in times of trouble.
- Masters: Your organizational skills are myriad and well-honed. Young Glass Walkers envy your information network.
- Doctorate: Only the highest leaders and officials stall you, the red-tape surgeon, or ever put you on hold. Your name may have appeared in Shadow Lord memos.
- Scholar: You can set up meetings with just about anyone, and you have the skills to run a multinational conglomerate with dozens of subsidiaries.

Backgrounds

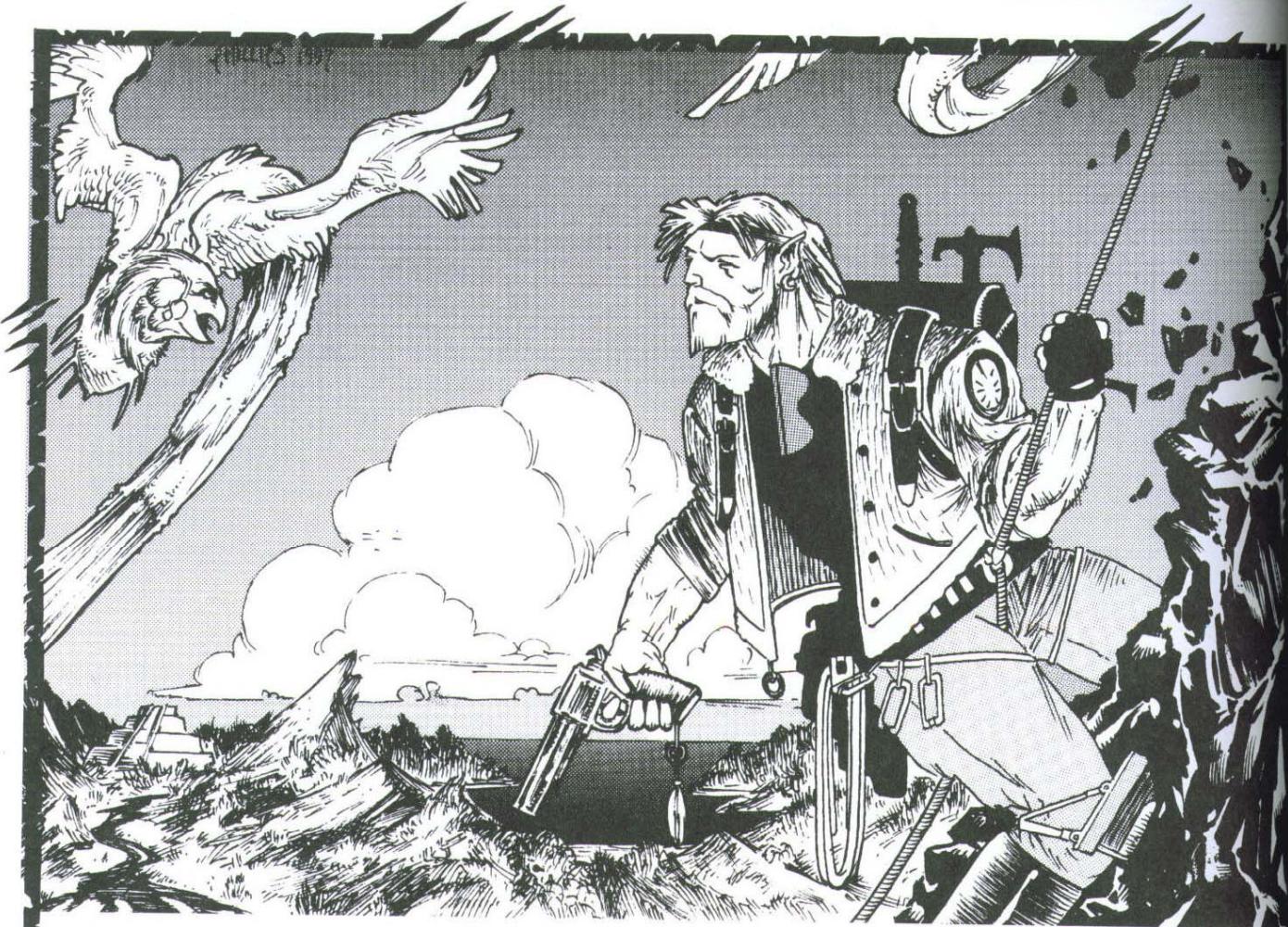
Some of the following Backgrounds are entirely new and just for Kinfolk. Others may be familiar from *Werewolf*; however, several have different benefits for Kinfolk characters. Storytellers should work closely with the players in making sure selected Backgrounds fit the chronicle. The Backgrounds Allies, Contacts and Mentor remain the same for Kinfolk characters (see main rulebook). Kinfolk may *not* purchase Kinfolk (duh), Past Life, Rites, Totem or Fetish (Fetish is a Merit for Kinfolk characters).

Equipment

Whether through your Garou family, a Fellowship or your own nimbleness, you have access to specialized equipment not normally available from the local outfitter. This equipment may be as simple as silver bullets or as rare and complex as a mage's ray gun. You begin the game with this equipment, but once it's gone, it's gone. If you blow all your dragon-breath bullets in one firefight, you'll have to finagle a way to get replacements through roleplaying. See "Equipment" in Chapter Four for more ideas and sample equipment.

- One minor item: Encompasses such objects as silver bullets, quality kevlar vests, street-level drugs, etc.
- Two minor items: More minor items include laser sights, healing herbs, gas masks or police-issue pepper spray.





To Have and Have Not

Kinfolk from certain tribes have restrictions on the Backgrounds they may purchase, as follows:

Bone Gnawers: May not purchase Pure Breed or more than three dots of Resources.

Glass Walkers: May not purchase Pure Breed or Mentor.

Red Talons: May not purchase Allies, Contacts, Equipment or Resources.

Shadow Lords: May not purchase Mentor.

Silent Striders: May not purchase Resources.

Silver Fangs: Must spend at least one Background point on Pure Breed.

Wendigo: May not purchase Contacts or Resources.

•••

One major item: Major items include explosive ammunition, wiretaps, pharmaceuticals, surgical field kits, white noise generators, small private aircraft and so on. You could also have a lesser talen (Gnosis 4 or less) at this level.

••••

Two major items: Additional major items include specialized vehicles, military-issue firearms, electron microscopes, etc. You may alternately have a greater talen at this level (Gnosis 5-7).

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One unique item: High-tech experimental firearms, magical crystal balls and untraceable poisons fatal to Garou are examples of unique items. This level alternately allows ownership of one powerful talen (Gnosis 8-10). Equipment at this level should be carefully regulated by the Storyteller.

Favors

For whatever reason, a Garou owes you a big indulgence. Perhaps you saved her life or rescued one of her Kinfolk. Whatever the reason, you can claim one favor from the

person; it may take the form of a "get out of trouble free" card, a cash gift, a shift as private bodyguard or even a wet job (assassination). Like Equipment, though, once you spend the Favor, it's gone forever, unless you somehow win another. Explain to your Storyteller how you got the favor and a bit about the person who owes you.

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

Pure Breed

Pure Breed determines the nobility of your blood and pedigree. Garou automatically recognize your pure breeding and probably pay you slightly more attention because of it. A few rare Kinfolk also possess an eye for pedigree. Kinfolk with Pure Breed are great prizes for marriage, so be ready for some offers of holy bedlock (or tumbles 'neath the pines) if you purchase this Background! Pure Breed also figures quietly into the chances for conceiving a Garou child. For every level of this Background you purchase, the chance of producing a full Garou offspring with a werewolf partner increases five percent. (Note: The Garou's Pure Breed, if any, does not figure into the odds.) For example, if Ilsa, a Kinfolk with three levels of Pure Breed, mates with Klaus, a Get of Fenris, their chances of having a Garou son or daughter would leap from a mere 10 percent to 25 percent (the base 10 percent chance, plus the 15 percent increase from the three levels of Pure Breed). In cases of Kin/Kin pairings, the chance for werewolf offspring increases by 1 percent for every dot of Pure Breed. Certain Silent Striders also postulate that Kin with Pure Breed may be reborn as Garou. The drawback to this Background is that the werewolves expect you to behave according to your lineage. Kin who fail to do so risk scorn and reprimands.

- Your ancestors were loyal tribe members and Kin, even if they weren't famous heroes.
- You descend from a family line that stood beside a minor Garou hero long ago.
- One of your direct ancestors (Garou or Kin) was a minor hero in recent memory.
- Your family line has had a long list of great warriors, sages, bards and so on, over many centuries.
- You bear a birthmark or some physical feature identical to one of a mighty Garou hero from your family.

Renown

Renown is a rare and precious Background among Kinfolk. While they cannot ever possess the rank of a

Garou, Kin occasionally receive acclaim for their deeds. This Background allows your character to start the game with some temporary Renown; you choose whether these points are Honor, Wisdom, Glory or a combination of the three. You and the Storyteller should work out the circumstances under which you received the Renown. (See Renown, p. 61, for more information.) As with Pure Breed, werewolves respect Kin with Renown, but they also demand a lot more work from them!

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

Resources

As in *Werewolf*, this Background reflects your personal wealth, assets and access to means. However, it's also an expression of what you can offer your Garou relatives. Werewolves expect Kinfolk with money to help the tribe buy sacred lands or purchase equipment for raids against Pentex. Rest assured, tribes such as the Shadow Lords and Glass Walkers keep careful tabs on what their Kin own. Stargazer and Red Talon Kinfolk may not purchase this Background. Some Bone Gnawer Kin actually have money and property to aid their Garou families, but never above three dots' worth.

- Student: You squeak by with an efficiency apartment, a low-income job, a moped and lots of canned soup. You could probably support one Garou relative for a short period of time.
- Middle class: You have an apartment (or small house) and an older automobile. Work is steady but unglamorous. If you pinched pennies and bought cheap cuts of beef, you could take care of a couple of Garou for about three months or one werewolf for a longer time.
- Upper class: You're a professional earning good wages. You live in a nice home or condominium, drive a car less than five years old and have nice clothes. A half-dozen werewolves could live with you for a year and still enjoy steak tartare on a nightly basis.
- Wealthy: The family estate is yours, complete with land, a few servants, a couple of fine cars and a stuffed bank account. You could easily support a large pack of Garou for an indefinite period of time.
- Filthy rich: Money is no object. You own multiple homes, cars and businesses. Your assets could probably support an entire continent's worth of a Garou tribe, at least for a while.

New Merits and Flaws

Merits and Flaws are optional tools for fleshing out your characters. Purchase Merits with freebie points; Flaws, up to a maximum of seven points, earn you freebie points. In addition to these Merits and Flaws, the *Werewolf Players Guide* and Project *Twilight* list others (as do the *Players Guides* for *Vampire*, *Mage*, *Wraith* and *Changeling*) that may be appropriate for your character (particularly if she is a supernatural Kinfolk). Consult with your Storyteller on what Merits and Flaws he prefers in the chronicle. Many Storytellers may want to use Flaws (or a character's getting rid of them) as the basis for stories, too.

Psychological

Gall (2 pt. Merit)

Audacity, guts, pluck — whatever it's called, you've got it. You aren't afraid to stand up to anyone, from naughty children to tribal leaders. This isn't brash, foolhardy behavior; you're still polite, after all. You simply don't get the shakes when the Silver Fang Ahroun comes over to speak to you. Many werewolves and Kin respect you for your honesty and forthrightness. Add an extra die to any Social roll involving a display of backbone.

Inferiority Complex (1 pt. Flaw)

Nope, you're not worthy. Never have been, never will be. You'll keep trying, and tackle whatever task the Garou set you to, but even if you succeed and make a good job of it, it still won't be good enough for you. In situations requiring you to take charge and strut your stuff, all your difficulties are raised by one.

Masochist (1 pt. Flaw)

You like to suffer for the Garou! Pain, torture and ridicule are your meat and drink, so you gladly volunteer for any venture that guarantees physical or mental agony. Masochism goes beyond a desire to prove worth and loyalty; your mind finds pleasure in it. Less caring werewolves take advantage of this Flaw; wiser ones think you're sick in the head.

Ulterior Motive (2 pt. Flaw)

Something other than love and respect for your Garou relatives and Kinfolk guides your actions. This "something" may be as simple as greed or a lust for vengeance against an enemy; it could also be that you're a traitor working for an outside agency, such as the Kindred or the SAD. Whatever the case, the cause or your secret employer holds your ultimate loyalty. Should someone suspect things aren't as they seem, you could be in big trouble.

Mental

Wolf-sense (1 pt. Merit)

This Merit is a blend of folk wisdom, practical sense and animal instincts. If you have Wolf-sense and make a suc-

cessful Intelligence roll, the Storyteller can opt to give you advice on whether you're about to do something stupid. It doesn't mean she'll tell you what you should or shouldn't do, but at least you'll have some warning.

Airhead (1 pt. Flaw)

You're so wrapped up in your own little world, you don't have a clue about reality! Perhaps you retreat into yourself because you're afraid or avoiding a problem, but more likely, you simply aren't using your gray cells. Maybe you fall in and out of conversations and spout non sequiturs. Whatever the case, the werewolves and other Kin snicker at you behind your back.

Awareness

Recognize Garou (3 pt. Merit)

Over the years, you've become adept at picking out the werewolves in a crowd. Rather than having any kind of mystical awareness, you've simply learned what physical and personality traits tend to mark Gaia's warriors. They just stand out to you, once they've undergone the Change. This Merit doesn't allow you to find werewolf cubs on the verge of Firsting, but you may notice their propensity for violence. All Perception attempts to notice which people in the room seem to have that special touch of Rage or wildness that could indicate they're werewolves are at -2 difficulty.

Supernatural

Fetish (5-7 pt. Merit)

You own a fetish, one you can actually use (or, at the very least, lend to Garou, ostensibly in return for other favors). You may have inherited this item, received it as a gift or found it on your own. In any case, the fetish is highly valuable. Fetishes aren't common among Garou, much less Kin. You and your Storyteller should work together on constructing the item and establishing how it came into your possession. Five points equals a Level One fetish, six points a Level Two fetish and seven points a Level Three fetish. See Chapter Four for sample Kinfolk fetishes. A few rare fetishes allow expenditure of Willpower rather than Gnosis for attunement and activation.

Gnosis (5-7 pt. Merit)

More than any other blessing, the possession of Gnosis among Kin is a special mark of Gaia's favor. It's extremely rare for mortals to be so gifted. Having Gnosis grants many privileges, such as the ability to learn Gifts, use fetishes and, in the case of a vampire's Embrace, the chance to die with dignity and honor, rather than suffer unlife. Even the stuffiest Garou gives a nod of respect to a Kin who possesses Gnosis. Kinfolk lucky enough to possess Gnosis recover it in the same manner as Garou. Kinfolk cannot have Rage; they do not have the fury of Gaia within them. Five points spent on the Merit grants one point of Gnosis; six points, two points of Gnosis; and seven points, three points of Gnosis.

Supernatural Kinfolk (4-5 pt. Merit)

Not actually intended for mortals, this Merit is necessary for vampire, wraith, mage and changeling characters who are Kin as well. Despite your undead, magickal or faerie status, your tribe accepts you as Kin (although they don't necessarily think of you in glowing terms). Individuals outside your immediate family may not like you, and other tribes probably won't treat you well — they may not even recognize you as Kin. After all, most werewolves view mages as caern raiders and vampires as Wyrm-spawn. Likewise, your "other" life may sometimes impinge on Kinfolk business. Still, there's value in knowing about both worlds.

Supernatural Kinfolk is a 4-point Merit for changelings, mages and wraiths. It costs 5 points for vampires; the werecreatures and vampires have always been at odds, and even family ties do little to erase the gulf between their ideologies. If you have an especially close friend among the Garou, you'll also need to buy Werewolf Companion (3-pt. Merit). If you build a Kinfolk character with the standard rules who's not dead, Embraced, Awakened or Kithain, you may not take this Merit; it's strictly for characters constructed as wraiths, vampires, mages or changelings and based upon rules from other World of Darkness games. See Chapter Three for more information.

Wyrm-Tainted (4 pt. Flaw)

Whether through your own twisted service to the Wyrm, an unfortunate quirk of heredity or just because of a supernatural accident, you reek of the enemy's blight. A number

of Gifts allow shapechangers to notice your foul stench and most may want to kill you outright. This is a risky Flaw!

Veiled (5 pt. Flaw)

You may believe in Gaia and the Garou way with all your heart and soul, but, for some reason, you're not immune to the Delirium. Gifts such as Rending the Veil and the Rite of the Parted Veil have no effect on you. You do receive a +1 bonus on the Delirium chart and retain all memories of what you see, but the sight of a Garou in Crinos form still invokes some sort of instinctive, uncontrollable reaction in you.

Social

Good Old Boy (or Girl) (2 pt. Merit)

For either gender, this Merit means the same thing: You're an intrinsically nice person, and you genuinely care about your fellows. Depending upon the setting, werewolves and other Kin (both human and wolf) tend to like you and confide in you. Even lupus Garou may approach you in a friendly manner; something about you just seems trustworthy and inviting. Take an extra die on all Social rolls involving interaction with Garou or Kinfolk.

Outsider (2 pt. Flaw)

Because of false rumors, an ill-done deed or some other reason, you have a poor reputation among Kinfolk and Garou. They don't necessarily hurt you, but they let you know you aren't welcome in their camps or homes. Make all





Social rolls involving interaction with werewolves and Kin at +2 difficulty.

Physical

Feral Appearance (1 pt. Merit)

Whether you're more hirsute than the average person or have a lean, hungry look to your features, the werewolves like what they see. It isn't a matter of physical beauty; there's just something about you that stirs their animal natures. You get an extra die on all rolls involving Appearance when dealing with homid Garou, and you are considered to have an extra dot of Charisma among lupus Garou (although it can't exceed 5).

Unscented (1 pt. Flaw)

For some reason, you have no discernible scent; it's completely missing from your body. While this condition might be an advantage when hiding from predators, it's a disadvantage among werewolves. They might pounce on you, unaware you're Kin. No Gifts, such as Scent of the True Form, can detect you as Kinfolk. Worse, the more suspicious types may think it's some sort of Wyrm power! Among a people who rely so heavily on the sense of smell, you've got a disability.

Barren/Sterile (4 pt. Flaw)

Kinfolk fill a limited number of roles in Garou society. For Kinfolk who serve werewolves as perpetuators of the species, inability to reproduce is a serious Flaw indeed. Not only does it carry a social stigma, it may also call down abuse, neglect or exile. Kinfolk men or women who can't reproduce lose a great deal of their usefulness in Garou eyes. For obvious reasons, vampire and wraith Kin can't take this Flaw.

Kinfolk Gifts

Certain Kinfolk *can* possess and use Garou Gifts, but a number of restrictions apply. Furthermore, Kinfolk learn Gifts not just by acquiring and spending points, but through good roleplaying and character development. Players, therefore, cannot purchase Gifts during character creation. If a high-ranking Theurge, such as Glass Walker Roger Daly, has 10 Gifts, while the Cliath Stargazer Howard Koar has three, how many might a mere Kinfolk possess? Perhaps one, if he's lucky, maybe two if he's incredibly talented or worthy. For Kin to possess Gifts — period — a good rationale needs to be in place. This section can help both Storytellers and players flesh out the use of Kinfolk Gifts in their chronicle.

The Learning

First of all, the Kinfolk who wants to learn a Gift needs to find a teacher. Most often, such instruction is obtained from some kind of spirit. But how does the Kinfolk contact the spirit? She may make a case to the local Theurge to summon a spirit for her lesson by presenting evidence of her need for the

Gift, her accomplishments for the tribe and so on. If the Theurge is willing and able (and a compelling reason must be present), he can then attempt to call the spirit forth. The pupil must negotiate with the spirit as well, usually through an interpreter with Spirit Speech. The Theurge most likely refrains from intervening himself, unless a threat to the sept is present. The Storyteller might ask the player to make appropriate Social rolls during this time.

For reasons all their own, spirits sometimes contact Kinfolk without a Theurge's summons. Perhaps the Kin has performed a task that pleased or served the spirit; it may want to reward her by teaching a Gift. Although Kin can't learn a Gift as quickly Garou can, a spirit can still teach a Kinfolk its Gift in a matter of hours.

Less likely, a Garou might be willing to teach his Kin a Gift. Again, the hopeful student must make her plea for help; chances are, the werewolf asks her to perform a task or somehow defeat him in a contest. If she's successful, the education process begins, and it's a long one. The Kin must practice the execution of the Gift over and over and over, ad nauseam. The best she might hope for is to be able to perform the Gift after a matter of months.

Renown, Tribe and Breed

Renown works positively for the Kinfolk wanting to learn a Gift. He may recite his deeds as part of the price for teaching or in making a case to a Theurge. If the hopeful student comports himself well, it likewise places him in good stead. On the other hand, Kinfolk don't have Rank; instead, they may have permanent Renown to a certain limit (see below). Thus, no Kin may have Gifts higher than Level One.

Not many werewolves outside the Kinfolk's breed or tribe divulge their secrets. A Red Talon Kin, for example, won't be able to convince a lupus Silent Strider Theurge to summon a spirit without sufficient cause. Tribal and breed tensions still cause wariness and distrust.

A Kinfolk is going to have better luck sticking with his own tribe and breed. In fact, the closer he is to his sept, the more luck he may have. The diligent Kin who has served as a generous soldier, parent and land owner has a much better chance of getting help than the new Kinfolk on the block.

Gnosis

By and large, Kinfolk don't have Gnosis, which further restricts the Gifts they may learn. Gifts such as Blur of the Milky Eye, Lambent Flame or The Falling Touch require no Gnosis to invoke. Kinfolk naturally learn these Gifts most commonly (if they learn any). The fortunate Kin who *do* possess Gnosis have many more options. They have the *potential* to learn any Level One Gifts, except for ones that cost Rage or require Rage rolls, whether such Gifts require Gnosis or not.

The Bottom Line: Costs

After long sessions of bargaining with Garou and spirits, hours or months of practice and suitable bribes and pleas, if the character still wants to acquire a Gift, she may spend her experience points and do so. The costs for Kinfolk to learn Gifts are:

Teaching	Cost
Gift is of Kin's breed or tribe	15 points
Gift is outside Kin's breed or tribe	20 points
Gift is taught by a Garou, rather than a spirit	+5 points

Original Kinfolk Gifts

Many Children of Gaia support their Kin's learning Gifts and have helped them create their own unique Kinfolk Gifts. The following are a few examples of such Gifts; of course, werewolves may learn them, too. With Storyteller approval, players might wish to create specialized Gifts for their characters, as well. Such Gifts automatically count as being within any Kinfolk's breed or tribe for purposes of spending experience.

- **Eve's Touch (Level One)** — This Gift allows the Kinfolk to soothe the wounds of other humans or animals through his touch.

System: The Kin must roll Intelligence + Medicine, difficulty 6, and touch the wound with his hands. The wound can't be from any source that would normally be considered aggravated. The target's injuries heal one Health Level per two successes. The Kinfolk may attempt this healing only once per person per day; the Gift is taught by a Pelican-spirit.

- **Dona Nobis Pacem (Level One)** — The Kinfolk is able to maintain an aura of peace over herself and anyone she touches.

System: The Kinfolk can use this Gift only once per scene, and must expend one Willpower point for the effect to occur. Humans in her immediate vicinity must make a Willpower roll, difficulty 8, to continue any sort of argument or violence. Garou so touched are at +2 difficulty to frenzy. A Unicorn-spirit or Dove-spirit teaches this Gift.

- **Echoes (Level One)** — A Kinfolk uses this Gift to hear the "echoes" of earlier conversation in an empty room.

System: At least five minutes must have passed after the conversation before the Kin can invoke the Gift. He rolls Perception + Empathy (difficulty 7) to "hear" what words have been spoken. With one success, he can hear conversations that occurred within the past hour; with two successes, he can hear the past day's chatter. With three or more successes, he can tune in to a conversation up to a week old. A Dog-spirit or Wolf-spirit teaches this Gift.

Numina Costs

Spending Freebie Points

First Numina (first Hedge Magic Path, Psychic Phenomenon, True Faith)
Additional levels in same Psychic Phenomenon
Second Numina or second Psychic Phenomenon
Third Psychic Phenomenon
Additional Hedge Magic Paths or levels
Additional Hedge Magic Rituals (one free with each new dot)
Additional levels of True Faith

Cost

7 for first dot
7 per dot
14 for first dot
14 for first dot
7 per dot
3 each
7 per dot

Spending Experience Points

Raising Hedge Magic Path
New Paths
New Rituals

Raising Psychic Phenomenon
New Phenomenon
True Faith cannot be raised with experience

current level x 7
7 for first dot
corresponding Path level x 3
(one free when Path purchased)
current level x 7
14 for first dot

Numina

Numina comprise a variety of mystical powers that don't fall into the realm of Gifts, True Magick, cantrips, Disciplines or Arcanoi. While perhaps not as varied as these other powers, Numina can be quite potent and effective. Some mortals possess these Numina "naturally"; they're born with the skills. Others learn them in secret through years of training. Three types of Numina are known to exist: Hedge Magic, Psychic Phenomena and True Faith. Players purchase Numina with freebie points during character creation; they may later boost these abilities with experience points or possibly diversify their talents with new Numina (and Storyteller approval). Rarely does a mortal possess more than one type of Numina. For example, psychic whiz Jane may have Animal Psi and Psychometry (both Psychic Phenomena), but only under the most extraordinary circumstances would she also have any paths of Hedge Magic. Numina are costly to learn; furthermore, they operate under very different (and often oppositional) paradigms. Learning too much puts a strain on the character's sanity. The chart above lists the costs for players using freebie points or experience points to raise Psychic Phenomena and Hedge Magic abilities. True Faith increases only through rewards given by the Storyteller for good roleplaying.

Hedge Magic consists of different facets of mystical ability, such as Healing, Summoning, Brewing and Cursing. Each Path has five levels of ability, along with specialized rituals. Granted, the casting and preparation is time-consuming, but Hedge Magic is pretty powerful. For the last word on Hedge Magic, see *World of Darkness: Sorcerer*;

Ascension's Right Hand is also pretty good, and **The Book of Madness** contains a particularly powerful and nasty Path called Dark Sorcery. **Spirit Chasing** (below) is a new Path especially for Kinfolk practicing Hedge Magic.

Psychic Phenomena involve powers of the mind. Knowing more than one Psychic Phenomenon is almost as rare as having access to more than one type of Numina. As with Hedge Magic, each Phenomenon has five levels; the higher the level, the greater the ability. **Project Twilight**, **The Hunters Hunted** and **Ascension's Right Hand** all contain information on Psychic Phenomena. Empathic Healing and Soulstealing are new Psychic Phenomena for Kinfolk (see below).

True Faith reflects a character's deep spiritual belief. The Numina's rating ranges from 1-10, with each level granting greater powers derived from that belief. True Faith is especially damaging to the undead, but it can also affect werewolves...or create miracles. **The Inquisition**, **Vampire: The Masquerade**, **The Vampire Players Guide**, **Vampire: The Dark Ages** and **The Hunters Hunted** all contain details on True Faith.

Hedge Magic Paths

As with True Magick, a mystic's beliefs and cultural background guide the practice of Hedge Magic. A magician's lifestyle, code of ethics and favored foci all determine how his rituals manifest his power. While usually not as freeform and powerful as workers of True Magick, hedge wizards still use intent to shape reality. Their beliefs about magic tend to touch most aspects of their lives.

Each level in a Hedge Magic Path has several rituals; a character gets one ritual per each new level learned. For example, a character who masters two levels of a Path

automatically has two rituals. Storytellers and players can create new rituals that especially suit their chronicles.

Spirit Chasing (Manipulation + Occult)

While this Path's name implies a similarity to Summoning, it has little relation to that variety of Hedge Magic. Spirit Chasing instead creates a bond between a mystic and his chosen plant or animal. Practitioners of this Path believe, as do werewolves, that within every living creature rests a soul, spirit, animus or whatever. Spirit Chasers try to watch and learn from these beings; unlike the learning of Gifts, however, the animus doesn't necessarily enter into any kind of "bargain" with the mystic. Instead, the practitioner studies the spirit, first by making contact with it, then by asking it questions and mimicking its natural abilities that manifest in this world. For example, a Spirit Chaser studying bears would begin by watching bears and observing their movements and patterns of life. He would then engage in some sort of private ritual of his own devising, pleading for a particular bear's spirit to appear; sometimes, this process takes years of work. Next, the mystic would explain to the spirit that he'd like to learn the ways of bears in their natural habitat. The spirit might require proof of the mystic's sincerity. But if it agrees, the Spirit Chaser can learn the rudiments of living like a bear. He could, for example, discover how to survive on raw meat, roots, berries, nuts or insects, even those poisonous to humans. As his understanding progresses, the mystic could

also learn how to focus his senses like a bear, hibernate or even grow claws. Spirit Chasers by no means restrict themselves only to mammals or even the animal world. A number of them choose plants for their Spirit Chasing. This Path is unique to every practitioner. To perform the task requires spending one Willpower point and rolling Manipulation + Occult versus a difficulty of the Path level + 4.

• This level allows the mystic to learn how to "eat" the food of the chosen spirit. It requires that the proper food be available (e.g., sunshine and water for plants or crumbs for insects). He receives full nutritional value from the meal, as if he were the animal or plant. Rituals might include chewing cud, hiding food to eat later and so on.

• With this level of Spirit Chasing, the character can extend his sensory perception to match that of his chosen animal or plant in one aspect. If the Spirit Chaser has a bond with a lynx, for example, he could see in the dark. Discovering hunters, scenting a trail or finding food are examples of rituals.

• • • Animals and plants have an innate understanding of self-preservation. Hurt creatures lick their wounds clean, while plants use energy from photosynthesis to repair torn leaves and roots. When winter approaches and food is scarce, some animals and plants fall into hibernation; they awake when spring comes. This level allows Spirit Chas-





ers the same luxury; they can fall into a healing sleep and recover one Health Level for every success rolled on Spirit Chasing. Each level regained requires four hours of rest. Thus, a person who got three successes could heal three Health Levels after 12 hours of sleep. Rituals include hiding, healing venomous wounds and childbirth.

•••• This level of Spirit Chasing grants the mystic keen insight and wisdom. The Storyteller decides, based upon the level of success, what sort of information to provide. For example, if a character has chosen the oak tree as her bonded spirit and rolls three successes, the wisdom that comes to her might involve seeing how an event long ago affected the present. The idea is that the oak has stood for many years and seen much. The Storyteller can use this level of the path to provide clues or plot hooks for the characters. Possible rituals encompass past visions, detecting lies or leaps of intuition.

••••• Only the most dedicated Spirit Chasers reach this level of mastery. At this point, they may practice a unique ability chosen from their spirit. A practitioner bonded to a deer could run quickly or jump over a high fence. If a character chose poison ivy, anyone who touched him might develop a blistering rash. A

minimum of three successes is necessary to invoke this effect; it's perhaps the closest Kinfolk can ever come to possessing the shapechanging skills of their Garou relatives. Acquiring physical prowess (such as great strength), offensive powers (growing claws or fangs) or shielding (sprouting thick fur) are all possible rituals.

Psychic Phenomena

Psychic Phenomena go by a lot of other names: ESP, psi powers or even mind-screwing. Kin having these abilities meet a range of reactions, from interest and respect to suspicion and distrust. Many Theurges, Stargazers and Silent Striders are eager to learn more about Psychic Phenomena, and they may seek out Kin who possess them.

Empathic Healing (Charisma + Empathy)

This ability is both beautiful in its own way and quite dangerous to its practitioner. The healer, in effect, joins her mind and body with that of the sick or injured subject. She then absorbs his hurts into her own body, where they heal normally (i.e., the healer takes the same number of Health Levels she heals as damage to her own body). Empathic

healers can even repair the most horrible aggravated wounds, which makes such practitioners quite valuable among Kin and werewolves alike. The drawback is, of course, that it may take months before the healer is able to function after using her powers. Usually, the healer will have an assistant or friend who can watch over her during the healing process. Most practitioners push themselves past their own limits in using this power to help others, though Gifts such as Mother's Touch can help them recover more quickly.

Each level of Empathic Healing requires a minimum of three successes (Charisma + Empathy) to be effective; successes can be cumulative, though the strain on the healer is harder to bear. The base difficulty is 6, but increases by 1 per level of Empathic Healing beyond Soothe the Spirit. Thus, Knit Flesh is difficulty 7, Mend Bones is difficulty 8, and so on.

- Soothe the Spirit: The healer absorbs minor bruises, simple depression and grief. She can heal damage of the Bruised Health Level. Her own body recovers in about a day. Difficulty: 6.
- Knit Flesh: The psychic can heal deep cuts and stop blood loss; Hurt and Injured Health Levels heal, though it takes about a week for the psychic to regain her strength. Difficulty: 7.
- Mend Bones: Wounded and Mauled Health Levels disappear from the subject, as the empath mends

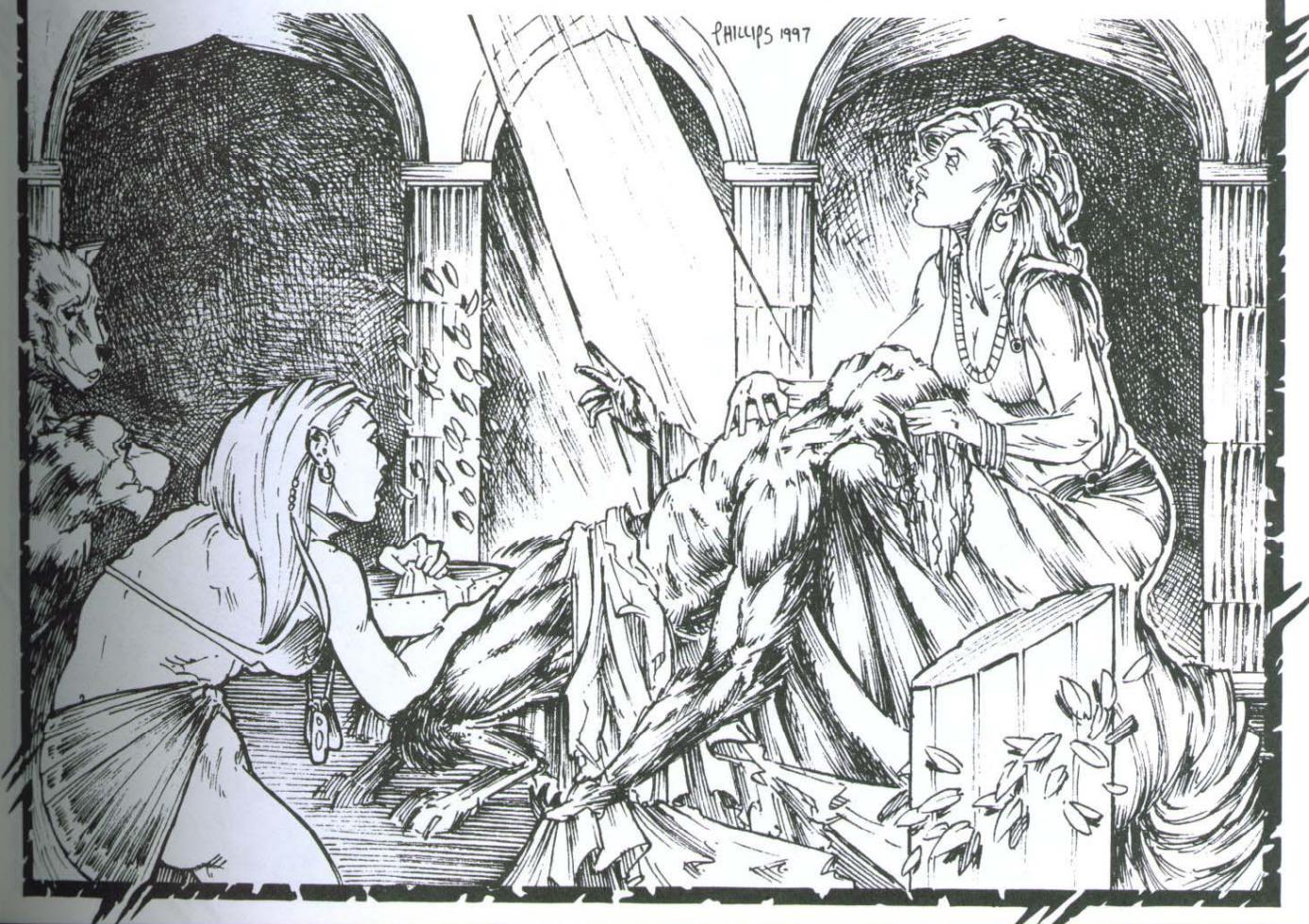
shattered bones and torn connective tissue. At best, she can hope for her own recovery after several months. Difficulty: 8.

•••• Organ Repair: The healer can repair severe internal injuries and even bring back patients from the brink of death. Crippled and Incapacitated Health Levels are healed. Minimum recovery time for the healer is a year. Difficulty: 9.

••••• Pacify Madness: Only the most able psychics ever reach this level of training, for it requires strict mental discipline and great courage. The healer actually absorbs the most severe forms of mental illness (including Harano) into her own mind and falls into the same state of psychosis she alleviates in her patient. Some healers never recover; at the least, it usually takes many, many months of rest. Difficulty: 10.

Soulstealing (Willpower)

This terrifying Phenomenon allows a psychic to invade a victim's subconscious and destroy essential elements of personality. Soulstealing doesn't cause madness; instead, it renders its targets mere shells. Most practitioners are Black Spiral Kin, but, though other werewolves are loath to admit it, a handful of their own disloyal Kinfolk know a level or two of



this Numina. Some Shadow Lord Kin learn it to achieve a modicum of power with their tribe. Kin who do know about Soulstealing tend to keep the knowledge to themselves.

To attempt Soulstealing, the psychic makes a Willpower roll and spends one Willpower point; the difficulty is her target's Willpower +2 (maximum of 10), and the victim must be in the line of sight. Victims generally don't remember the incident; however, the Storyteller may allow them a Perception + Enigmas roll to notice the Soulstealing in progress. Soulstealers can attempt this Phenomenon once per scene on any living being. They generally shun vampires and wraiths; a few Stargazers whisper dark tales about Soulstealers losing *their* minds after confronting these undead creatures.

- Dream Invasion: The psychic can enter the dreams of the victim and interact with the subconscious. She cannot plant or steal memories, but she can take part as an "actor" in the dreams and remember what she sees.
- Will Sapping: With each success, the psychic drains away a temporary point of the victim's Willpower. The victim recovers Willpower in the normal manner.
- Drain Vital Essence: Each success by the psychic drains away a Health Level from the victim. These wounds aren't aggravated, however, and the victim recovers normally. No physical marks

appear on the victim; rather, this is "mental" damage.

••••

Shift Life: For every *two* successes, this variation of Drain Vital Essence lets the psychic transfer one of the victim's Health Levels to her own body as an extra Bruised Health Level (or to heal one of her own lost Health Levels). She may add extra Health Levels up to twice normal (i.e., up to seven levels).

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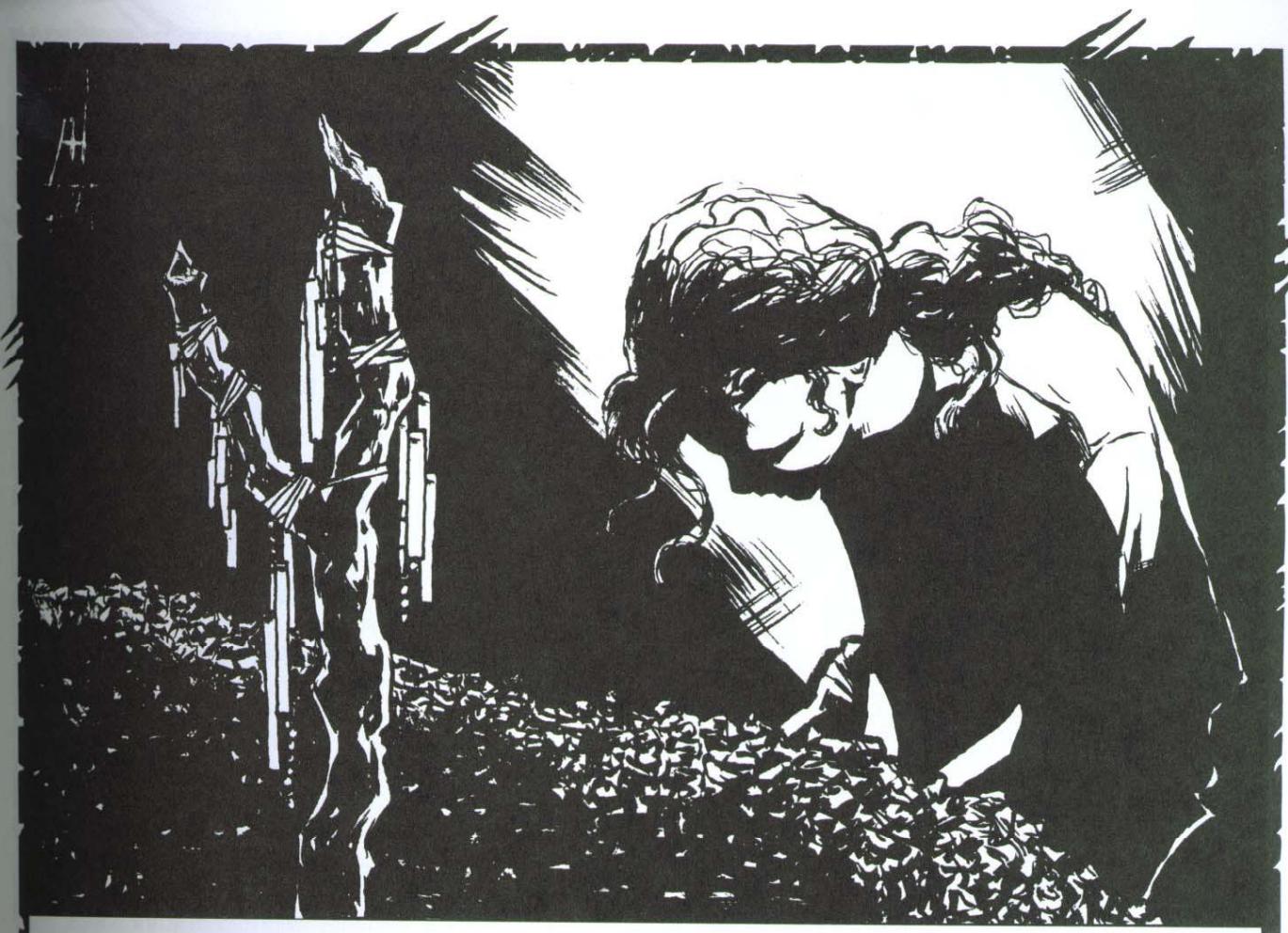
Gnosis Theft: For every *two* successes, the psychic may steal and keep one point of Gnosis for her own. Even if the psychic doesn't possess the Merit: Gnosis, she may use this Numina to empower Gifts or fetishes — but once spent, she doesn't recover the Gnosis as would a Garou. She must steal more.

True Faith

You have a deep-seated faith in and love for Gaia, God, or whatever other higher power you believe in. You begin the game with one point of Faith (a Trait with a range of 1-10). This Faith provides you with an inner strength and comfort that continues to support you when all else betrays you.

Your Faith adds to Willpower rolls in times of dire need, and gives +1 to the Dice Pool for each point in Faith. It doesn't aid rites, Gifts or any such abilities, however. The exact supernatural effects of Faith, if any, are completely up





to the Storyteller, although it will typically repel vampires and wraiths, if the player can succeed in a Faith roll against a difficulty of the opponent's Willpower. Faith has effects that differ from person to person and are almost never obvious — some of the most saintly people have never performed a miracle greater than managing to ease the suffering of an injured soul.

An additional benefit of True Faith is innate protection from the powers of mages — each point of Faith acts as a die of countermagick against the Effects of the Namers.

True Faith is a rare attribute in this day and age. Only mortals may start the game with more than one Faith point.

Additional points are awarded only at the Storyteller's discretion, based on appropriate behavior and deeds.

(For the most complete look at True Faith, see *The Inquisition*, pp. 63-71. Although many of the catechisms of the Church are inappropriate for Gaian faiths, that book nonetheless treats Faith in the detail it deserves.)

Optional Rule: Renown

Most tribes recognize (albeit grudgingly, for many) that Kinfolk deserve praise. After all, hiding their great deeds (few though they might be, in Garou eyes) would bring dishonor to

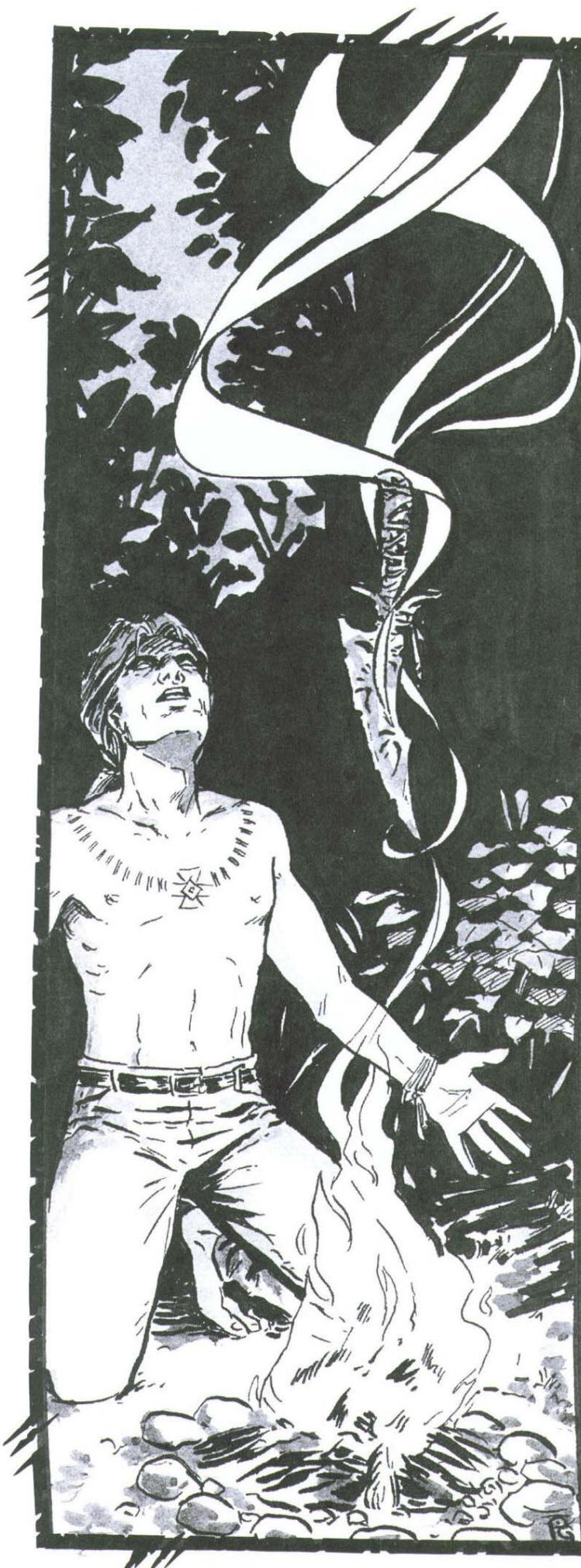
Numina Chart

Psychic Phenomena

Phenomenon	Effect	Roll	Difficulty	Cost
Empathic Healing	Heal another	Char + Emp	8	Special
Soulstealing	Destroy victim's will	Willpower	Target's Willpower +2	1 Willpower

Hedge Magic

Path	Effect	Roll	Difficulty	Cost
Spirit Chasing	Animal/plant functions	Manip + Occult	Level + 4	1 Willpower



the tribe. Over the centuries, Kin have occasionally saved the lives of Garou leaders and won accolades for such bravery. While werewolves certainly don't give as much weight to the heroics and bragging of Kin, they usually don't deny their relatives' courage in the face of hard evidence. So, in cases of great valor and honor, Kinfolk do earn Renown. It's the same system as Garou Renown, with a few limitations.

First of all, like werewolves, a Kin's temporary Renown gets converted to permanent Renown through a Rite of Accomplishment. However, Kinfolk can never have more than five points of permanent Renown in any of the three categories: Honor, Glory and Wisdom. Thus, the greatest amount of permanent Renown a Kin could ever get would be 15 points (five in each category). A Kinfolk of this stature likely has performed extraordinary deeds most of her life; the award probably is posthumous!

Furthermore, werewolves are *far* stingier in bestowing Renown or giving Rites of Accomplishment to Kin, particularly in modern times. If a Garou warrior received three points of Glory for killing a neonate vampire, chances are, Kinfolk in the same circumstance might receive one, at best. Kinfolk certainly don't get any extra points for fighting against silver; to them, it's no more dangerous than any other weapon. If in doubt, err on the miserly side and withhold Renown for Kin.

Kinfolk have no Rank whatsoever. A respectful Garou relative might introduce a Kin with Renown as "my cousin who slew twelve Banes" or "my brother, known for his sage words to the tribe," but that's about the extent of it. Notice, too, that Kinfolk don't receive any awards for protecting their own tribe's Garou and Kin; it's their expected role.

Finally, it's far easier for Kinfolk to *lose* Renown once they've earned it. Garou are going to expect a lot more from accomplished Kin and keep their eyes open for any mistakes. Rest assured, the tribes make a much bigger deal about screwups than worthy deeds. Most tribes keep careful tabs on Kinfolk with Renown and swiftly lower the boom on any dumb enough to get big heads. Moreover, the Kin is going to have to prove over and over and over again that she deserved the recognition in the first place. So, while Renown can be a benefit, it's often a curse.

The following is a sample chart for Kinfolk Renown. Add to it and extrapolate awards of Renown to suit your chronicle. Remember, for every positive reward, there is probably a greater negative. If you refer to the Renown chart in the Werewolf main book (pp. 190-193), don't forget that Kinfolk awards are not worth as many points. As a ballpark figure, think about awarding one point of Kin renown per every four points of renown for werewolves. If you think Renown will upset the balance of your chronicle, don't use it at all.

Kinfolk Renown Awards Chart

Activity	Glory	Honor	Wisdom
Combat and Encounters			
Extreme valor in the face of death	1	1	
Surviving an Incapacitating Wound	1		
Mystical Events			
Exposing Wyrm-tainted Kinfolk	1		
Exposing a Garou as Wyrm-tainted		4	
Having and following a prophetic vision		2	
Discovering fetishes, talens, long-lost lore		1 to 3	
Being asked to participate in a moot or rite	1	2	
Caern Activities			
Being asked to help guard a caern	1		
Dying in defense of a caern	3	3	
Refusing to fight in a caern's defense		-3	
Relations with Garou and Kinfolk			
Serving your tribe faithfully (for a half-decade)	1	1	
Maintaining good relations with other Kin		1	
Bearing Garou offspring	1	1	
Refusing to mate		-4	
Manners and Behavior			
Answering a request for sage advice			1
Protecting Garou not of your tribe		1	
Rudeness	-1	-1	
Speaking badly of Garou		-3	
Acting without honor	-1 to -5		



Chapter Three: Supernatural Kinfolk

*I'm walking a tightrope,
And I'm scared of heights.*
— The Jody Grind, "Eight Ball"

Branching Paths

Human Kin are just plain folks...most of the time. However, humans *sometimes* go through bizarre changes of their own. Consider the poor relative who falls into the clutches of a vampire and becomes one of the Kindred himself. What of a Garou's sister who suddenly feels her Avatar stir within her? Death comes to all humans eventually, but what of humans not ready to pass on? And what about Kin who aren't completely human in the first place? A fair number of Kinfolk have also been born to a certain faerie nature.

So, vampires, mages, wraiths and changelings *can* also be Kinfolk. But such coincidences are the exception, not the rule. Gaia does influence who her warriors' Kin are, and generally, being a relative to werewolves is burden enough! Being something beyond human makes the situation a thousand times more difficult. There are social ramifications ranging from hatred to scorn to apprehension, among

werewolves and "normal" Kin alike. Most supernatural beings dance along a cliff's edge and teeter between their human identity and their Restless, Awakened, undead or fae one (as the case may be). Kinfolk status just brings such beings one notch closer to the brink.

If you choose to play a supernatural Kinfolk, construct your character according to the normal rules of **Vampire**, **Wraith**, **Mage** or **Changeling**; obviously, you'll need the appropriate book for specifics on Disciplines, Arcanoi and so on during play, too. You must also buy the Merit: Supernatural Kinfolk (4 pt. Supernatural Merit; 5 pts. for vampires). If you want a close friend among the Garou, you'll need to purchase Werewolf Companion (3 pt. Supernatural Merit; see the **Players Guide** for the pertinent game) — you are *not* assumed still to be on glowing terms with your relatives. There are also certain rules issues that come up when Kinfolk are supernatural; the sidebars below are notes to Storytellers and players about potentially dangerous side effects for supernatural Kinfolk.



Vampires

*Now I'm so in love with your idea,
I could live inside one single kiss.*

— Kelly Hogan, "The Idea of You"

Transcribed from Professor Warner's notes:

Around a hundred-and-fifty years ago, I lost my life. Makes it sound like I misplaced it somewhere, but that's not the case at all. Come to think on it, the deed took place on this street in a crumbly warehouse. Guess it got tore down a few years back. I don't know.

Nathaniel Rhodes, a Nosferatu, took a fancy to me; seems he marveled at my ability to learn the truth behind the disappearances and thefts in the area. He thought I'd be the perfect spy for him. Of course, my sire didn't have a clue about werewolves, or else he'd have lasted longer. Five nights after my Embrace, they caught on to what had happened to *their* top spy and tracked the poor ugly bastard down. My brother, Henry, struck Nat's head from his shoulders. The others of my clan hid me deep in the sewers, away from my searching relatives. My folks eventually forgot about me. But I've never forgotten about the Garou. I keep up with them, watching them from the shadows. My brother lived long enough to see his great-grandchild Change. Through the years, I've watched his children and their children's children, up to the present night. Even now, I can see Henry in the young'uns.

I'm not the only Kin to have fallen to Caine's curse, but the Kindred who Embrace us seldom know just what it is they're doin'. Their hankerin' for progeny often means destruction for both sire and childe; werewolves track down vampire Kin with a vengeance the likes of which you've never seen. The stereotypical sire is Gangrel, but I'd bet any clan could have Kinfolk in it. I reckon the city-bred tribes provide more than their fair share of childer. Sometimes, they remain loyal to their tribe, but more often, all werewolf ties fall away in their first years of unlife.

Becoming a vampire was rough, let me tell you. Existence as one of the Kindred is a bitter blow at first — to be deprived of your closest kin, to lose connection with life, to never feel the sun or a summer afternoon's rain...well, most start craving their final release. Suicide isn't so uncommon among Embraced Kin, at least those who've learned enough to know what they've lost. Others give themselves up to their Changing brothers, which amounts to the same thing as Final Death. Though, come to think of it, I met a Gangrel who ran with some Children of Gaia — she claimed to be Kinfolk, and they'd obviously accepted her. (She was under a Camarilla Blood Hunt, though — so much for trying to live in both worlds.) So maybe there're exceptions out there.

Did I want to die? Hell yes, I did! Final Death seemed real appealing. But I've always been a practical sorta guy — the street teaches you these things, and I realized that I was in a position to help the tribes in ways they could never

conceive. Take that kid hangin' out in the street over there. Her name's Heather. She's a street urchin, patrolling this town the way I once did, generations ago. She's especially dear to my heart, 'cause she's got Henry's eyes and the same playful sense of purpose that sent me looking where I shouldn't have. I'll protect her and the ones that follow her, too. After all, what's family for?

I understand some Kinfolk possess a spiritual connection to Gaia, kinda like the werewolves themselves. Well, when one of those lucky bastards' blood is gone, and his life is hanging by a thread, that connection might draw his soul free before it can be imprisoned. I overheard a Ventrue telling a clanmate that in one of his attempts to create progeny, the neonate just died inexplicably, with a look of complete and utter calm on her face. A little checking led me to the conclusion that the victim was the daughter of a Glass Walker don! After some thought, I decided the war that'd be provoked by divulging the girl's fate would do the Walkers more harm than good, so that's a secret I've saved so far.

—Kevin Addison, Bone Gnawer Kinfolk, Clan Nosferatu

The Fatal Kiss

The relationship between vampiric Kinfolk and the Garou is certainly problematic. The Garou's wrath falls heavily on any vampire responsible for Embracing Kin...and likely strikes the unlucky Kinfolk, as well. Even the gentlest Garou considers existence as a vampire a fate much worse than death. To many, quick execution of the Embraced Kinfolk is a mercy. Kin who become vampires are pretty worthless in the eyes of werewolves; they can't breed or help out in the daytime, for instance. What's more, most Garou believe all vampires, Kin or no, are irredeemable pawns of the Wyrm.

Any Gifts or Gnosis the Embraced Kin might have had are gone forever. Period. No exceptions. Most Numina are gone, too, although a Storyteller might allow a vampire to retain True Faith or purchase related Disciplines (Thaumaturgy, for instance, if the Kin knew Hedge Magic) at a reduced cost. Those rare Kinfolk with Gnosis do have one small hope: They can roll their Gnosis and attempt to die. A single success at difficulty 6 indicates the Kinfolk dies quickly and painlessly; a simple failure still allows her to die, albeit painfully and slowly. A botch means she becomes Kindred.

Vampiric Kinfolk who keep their Gaian loyalties are more likely to align with the Camarilla or anarchs, which enable the Kin to retain some of their human moral codes. Recommended Merits and Flaws for vampire Kin include: Code of Honor, Dark Secret, Prey Exclusion (Garou), Territorial, Vengeance, Acute Sense (any), Eat Food, Inoffensive to Animals, Enemy, Notoriety and Ward (other Kin). For details, see The Vampire Players Guide.

Mages

When we found the rip in heaven,
We should have just ascended then.

—'Til Tuesday, "Rip in Heaven"

Transcribed from Professor Warner's notes:

You'll have to 'scuse the mess; just got back from a real nifty conference and haven't had a chance to clean up the place yet. Have a seat here in this chair, Professor, and let me know what you think of it. Special ergonomic design, all my own.

That stuff in the corner? Oh, I'm doing an experiment on the tensile strengths of various tribal furs. Huh? What's the point? Did you just ask that? The implications for genetics are astounding. I plan to submit a paper for Internet publication to Strangelove's Web site that gives support for intertribal breeding. See, I got a lot of free samples from the Glass Walkers and Bone Gnawers! And my prize and glory is that brown snippet from one of those wandering werewolves. So far, I have to tell you, no real differences. But I need more samples! Think you could help out? I mean, it's not like I shave a whole flank clean or anything! Just a patch here and there. It doesn't hurt a bit! Gosh, do you think I could ever, like, hurt a Garou? You must think I have a death wish or something. I'm a Scientist, dammit, and a highly ethical one at that!

How did I become a Scientist? Well, I guess it all started when I was about eight. My mom, she's a programmer by the name of Celeste Coates. Ever heard of her? She's a troubleshooter for her sept down in Texas. Anyway, she always used to bring home old computer scraps from the maintenance shop. You know, bits the folks were just going to throw away. I used to play with them and build toys of my own, and then, one day, I built my very own walking, talking robot. It was pretty simple compared to the stuff I made later; all it could do was record voices and then play them back. But it sure startled the hoot out of a bunch of Glass Walkers who came over to get Mom's advice on a project! One of the guys busted out the ceiling fan when he turned into a man-wolf. He was still a little miffed for a while afterward, but most of the others thought it was great.

Mom spent a lot of money on toys for me after that — building blocks, Erector Sets, chemicals, microscopes and so on. They never worked quite like I wanted, so I tinkered with them until they did stuff like light up and make colored smoke. Most of the sept members really liked that; I guess they hoped I'd, you know, change. But I never did.

When I was 14, I got a scholarship to a science and math magnet school; from there, it was college then grad school. I met up with some other Scientists there, including my partner, Dr. Bogdan. Wonderful things happened! Finally, I met people who understood and were interested! Ah, it was bliss to talk about Science and have others listen. I learned a lot from them, especially about other groups called Traditions and Conventions. Some were sort of

Scientists but more into the whole "pure thought" bit; I'd seen folks like that in grad school: all rules and not an ounce of creativity in their worthless veins! Others dabbled in that whole folksy spiritual thing; you know, shamanism and body magick and so on. Not Science! Well, I guess everybody can't be lucky enough to understand it.

I get along pretty splendidly with the werewolves, I must say! More than one of the Glass Walkers has come to me for help with a technical problem. You know them and their tempers; if even a single chip has a glitch in it, they're ready to throw the whole CPU across the room! And more than once, they've been willing to get certain supplies for me; they've got wonderful networks, you know.

Except...they haven't had much luck with my hair samples. If you want to lend a hand, I'd be happy to put your name in the acknowledgments when the paper gets published in *Paradigma*. What do you think?

— Dr. Isabella Coates-Bogdan, Son of Ether, Glass Walker Kinfolk

Note to Thea from Professor Warner:

Miss Corrigan, I almost hate to ask, but perhaps you could mention this request to your brother?

Wraiths

We are dust and shadow — the dream of history.

We are the hungry ghosts crying "Remember me, remember me."

— Shriekback, "Dust and Shadow"

From Professor Warner's notes, excerpt from work in progress, *Tales in the Night: Ethnographic Accounts of Spiritual Visitations Among the Oglala Sioux*

A day of sunshine, a day of darkness. Cool river water splashed over my fingers, and laughter of Wihakayda and Ptaysanwea, my daughters, echoed to the shores. Within the next moon, Ptaysanwea would leave us to join with the family of Mahpiua Luta, Red Cloud. Ptaysanwea's name, in our language, meant White Buffalo Woman. The spirit

Mirrors of the Soul

While Gaia's chosen probably aren't going to maim Awakened Kin on sight, the werewolves are still distrustful of mages. Many Garou fear that mages wish to steal from caerns, or worse, to use werewolves in bizarre experiments. In many cases, the Garou aren't wrong.

No Kin who has Gnosis or Gifts can Awaken in the first place; Gnosis and the link with Gaia preclude the stirring of the Avatar. Kinfolk without Gnosis or Gifts, however, can Awaken in the same manner as any other mage. Most Numina are lost upon Awakening, except True Faith (in reality, they're replaced by a shift in paradigm and a general change in how the new mage does things — for more information, check out *World of Darkness: Sorcerer*).

The interesting side to being an Awakened Kinfolk is that True Magick, if coincidental, often simulates (with less Paradox) Garou Gifts. Vulgar Effects, even if successful, earn one point of Paradox. It's also more difficult to cast vulgar magick (without Sleeper witnesses, highest Sphere +4; with Sleeper witnesses, highest Sphere +5). Mages still should err on the side of caution and couch their magick in coincidental terms, but around werewolves, coincidence is a little more flexible. Treat Garou as Awakened for determining difficulty and Paradox. Plus, exercise a little creative judgment in determining what's vulgar and what's not. Many mage Kin actively study how Garou Gifts manifest, and they mimic Gifts with Effects, particularly when they practice magick upon werewolves.

For example, say a mage wants to endow his Ahroun sister with silver claws (imitating the Level Three Gift: Silver Claws). This Effect is Matter 2/Life 3, so the difficulty would normally be 7 (vulgar, with no witnesses, highest Sphere +4). However, the mage is trying to create a perfectly coincidental Effect in the eyes of the Garou. Ahroun and Silver Fangs of Rank Three may well have Silver Claws. When the Garou's claws turn silver, no one present is going to associate the mage with vulgar magick, assuming the werewolf cooperates and performs the gestures and howls normally associated with the Gift. Consider making the difficulty the same as for coincidental Effects (highest Sphere +3) and not assigning the automatic Paradox point. Treat botches the same way (one Paradox point for every dot in the highest Sphere used).

Now, if a mage tried to turn the Garou into a cactus — or change herself into a wolf — these are different stories....

Typically, the rare Kinfolk who Awaken usually find themselves drawn to the Dreamspeakers, whose affinity for the spirit world mirrors that of shapeshifter society. Depending upon their tribal relations, Kin can also wind up in most of the other Traditions, although the Cult of Ecstasy and Order of Hermes have few ideological or social ties with the Garou. The Technocracy is usually anathema for Gaian Kin, even Glass Walkers. Recommended Merits and Flaws include Code of Honor, Dark Secret, Spark of Life, Sphere Natural (Spirit), Spirit Magnet, Enemy and Notoriety (see *The Book of Shadows* for details).

guide had promised she would be a wise counselor, for the mark of Gaia was upon her, a half-moon on her cheek. She was too young to show us the wolf within, but we were proud, so proud of her. My daughters....

They came, five of them. Wyrmbringers. Little One, my Wihakaya, why could I not save you?

The reason is quite simple, Swan Maid. You weren't strong enough! Such a shame you couldn't have been Garou, too. Then you could have ripped their hearts out! But Gaia didn't seem to care, did she? You must have done something wrong to be so weak, both in flesh and mind. Why were you at the faraway river in the first place? What a fool you were to wander away like that!

Little One had seen less than nine summers. They tore open her womb before our eyes. So quickly? It was forever to me. Ptaysanwea fought them hard; perhaps if there had been more time, the Change would have taken her as it did her father. Her strong hands tore at one's filthy hair; the thin mass of it ripped away. He screamed at her and with his rifle beat her until she moved no more. Oh, Gaia, how I hated you then! Your own, slain before she tasted your pleasures?

Obviously, she wasn't worthy either. Why did Gaia not intervene? Maybe you passed your taint on to your children? I can think of no other reasonable explanation.

My end took long hours. They stole my clothes, my bags, my furs and those of my slain children. They forced their bodies upon me, all five of them. Finally, one drew his black powder weapon and destroyed my breasts. The men left me to die in the cold sunset, but the moon had come before I left the world. Was this Gaia's only comfort? I felt no gratitude. Her light was the last I saw.

I came to the Underworld with no understanding, no expectations. What was there for me in the lands of the spirits? How did I come to be there, anyway? It was not my place, not the realm of the People. A Wyrmbringer, a white woman priestess, tore away my Caul and told me about the Reaping that had stolen me from the lands of my ancestors. I wanted her to die, but death had already claimed her. She told me I was a member of the Grim Legion, that she would help lead me to power if I wished it. I wanted nothing but revenge. I desired to see those who had slain me fall in their own blood, drown in the dung of their animals. I left the white woman. I found others among the Restless of the People's blood, and we are branded Heretics. No other Garou Kin have I met in my time here.

Well, have you even looked? Sounds to me like you have a reasonable plan, Swan Maid. Now, do something about it! Go on, take a stand. Show your fury!

I watched my stolen property pass from the killers' hands to their sons and their sons' sons. My clothes and furs are long gone, but my bags and necklaces remain in a Wyrmbringer's museum. The great-great-great-grandson of my murderer displays them and knows nothing of how his ancestor took them from my body.



*Ride him, Swan Maid. Take his body and make him suffer!
What do you care for the Codes?*

But too I have seen a young girl among the last remnants of the Wendigo tribe. She is tall and slender. And upon her right cheek is the mark of the half-moon. I have sent her dreams, and she listens. Is she Ptaysanwea reborn? Perhaps, at last, Gaia has seen fit to spin the tale of my revenge.

— Magaskawee (Swan Maid), Wendigo Kin

Changelings

*All through the dust and the refuse of a thousand years,
they've been calling,*

Until the time they must refuse to let their tears keep falling.

— Kelly Hogan, "Waiting"

Transcribed from Thea's recording:

Ah, the crowd seems to be thinning a bit on the dance ground. It's time for the storytellers to begin their telling in earnest. I wonder if Lady Vaughn will be there tonight? You've never heard her, have you? Well, you're in for a treat, I dare say.

Hmm? Sea, Sea, Thea lass, I hear you. Who were you asking about? Oh, aye, young Mr. Danahur? He's Kinfolk, right enough, but I'll warn you not to go castin' your eye on that lad, for he'll be naught but trouble. Why? You have to be askin'! He's fey-touched, sure enough, and Dana's blood has laid a dark cast upon the poor boy. You don't believe me, ye daft girl? I'll tell you plain, you've the blood of the Fair Folk in you, same as I, same as he. But it's running strongan' fast in the veins of young Jamie, and the Unseeligh have a hold on his soul.

You heard me right, lass! The fae ones take a liking to our kind. Of course, the Fair Folk are nothing if not capricious, and all tribes can claim Kinfolk who are Kinain, if not changelings outright. The Striders have their match in the fae wanderers of the eastern deserts, and the Uktena and Stargazers wrap themselves up in a faerie's riddle at the drop of a derby. And I've seen some Silver Fangs that have the look of fae madness in their eyes. More's the pity.

But the Fianna have the lion's share of faerie fire, and everybody knows it. Why? Well, you're an inquisitive lass, and it's plain the Circle of Songs will miss my company 'til you've had your fill of answers. My uncle (a Galliard of the highest renown, mind you) told it this way: Long ago, he said, in the earliest days of the Garou, the goddess Dana heard the sweet howl of a young Galliard as he praised Luna in a snowy wood. So taken was she by the beautiful voice, that she came to him in wolf form and mingled her voice with his; aye, and other things they mingled besides! The

The Courage of Despair

Only a few of the Restless Dead are willing to defy Charon's code and deal with the world through Phantasm and Puppetry; but if ever there were a group whose "family affairs" could keep a relative from letting go completely, it's the Kinfolk. No animal Kin ever become wraiths, at least not in the legends of western Europe and the Americas; Gaia has special places for them and prohibits their return to the world as ghosts. Furthermore, except for the occasional Silent Strider, werewolves and their Kin have little interaction with the Dark Umbra at all. In Africa, mystics do spin a few tales of animal ghosts, which are terrifying monsters that frighten humans and Changers alike. The tiny fraction of Kin who do become Restless Dead have typically suffered some unusually horrible torment or tragedy. Their Fetters and Passions are exceptionally strong and difficult to resolve, even beyond the ones of the ordinary wraith. Kinfolk who had Gnosis, Gifts or Numina lose them immediately; the Restless cannot hold onto spiritual blessings of Gaia, and mortal magics or psychic powers have no meaning in the Shadowlands.

Kin wraiths are sometimes out of sorts with the Hierarchy — some feel more drawn to Heretics who pursue something approaching Gaian ideals. Most concentrate on Arcanoi that allow them to pierce the Shroud and experience the living world, such as Embody or Outrage. Recommended Merits and Flaws for wraith Kin include: Code of Honor, Echoes of the Past, Full of Life, Mortal Companion, Psychic Ally, Unknown Fetter, and Bright or Umbral Connection (for details, see the *Wraith Players Guide*).

fruits of that night grew within her, and as the days waxed long, she gave birth to twins. One was the first Fianna and the other, a Daoine sidhe. So it is that the Fianna are tied to the fae by bonds of blood. These bonds they renew now and again, especially with the sidhe of Houses Fiona and Scathach, our closest Arcadian allies.

By the bye, lass, should you ever meet one of the Fair Folk, have a care not to trust the capricious devils, save only in this: make it clear whose Kin you are, and call upon the ancient vows of friendship. There are some oaths that cannot be broken.

Forget the lad. See here, I know this fine young Galliard, and he just happens to be at the bardic circle tonight....

— Frank Shea, storyteller, Fianna Kinfolk.

Through a Looking Glass Brightly

Changeling Kin are still uncommon, but greater in numbers than other supernatural Kinfolk. Over the years, the bond between fae and werewolves has remained strong; after all, Kithain regard Garou as Prodigals — wayward fae — rather than enemies. Most changeling Kin are welcome, although some werewolves are a little suspicious of their tricks and erratic whims.

For a changeling Kinfolk to possess Gifts is impossible; they interfere with the use of Glamour, the fae's own magic. Likewise, a Kinfolk with Gnosis and a fae soul can never enter the Dreaming; he'll live out his life without experiencing Chrysalis and die not knowing he carried within him the aspect of a changeling. Fae with Kenning may notice the potential changeling, but they're often loath to bring it to the Kin's attention. This silence may seem cruel, but not when removing Gnosis from the potential changeling (an incredibly banal process) is the price for rousing the fae seeming. Thus, not alerting a Kinfolk with Gnosis and a fae soul to the truth is actually a kindness of sorts; it's better that they go on as Kin without knowing the whole tale. No changeling Kin would ever try to obtain Gnosis after fully awakening to his fae mien.

The Fianna long ago made an oathbond of friendship to the High Kings of the fae, and the Kithain still respect those words. Many Kithain also find the company of Garou pleasurable and a means to gather Glamour.

Changeling Kin usually gravitate toward the Seelie viewpoint (if they were raised in a Gaian environment, anyway). Their kith usually reflect their tribal relation (such as troll Get of Fenris Kin, or sluagh relatives of the Silver Fangs and Shadow Lords), although this correlation is by no means the rule! Recommended Merits and Flaws include: Code of Honor, Wyld Mind, Poison Resistance, Regeneration, Chimerical Magnet, Magical Prohibition or Imperative (geasa are especially appropriate for Fianna Kin), Reputation (the folk of some kingdoms, especially Gwydion fae, actually view Garou as boon allies), Notoriety (then again...) or Ward (other Kin).

Bad Seeds

What happens when supernatural Kinfolk turn into rotten apples? For a vicious twist, Storytellers might enjoy using vampire, wraith, mage or faerie Kin as enemies in the chronicle. These folks could cause serious trouble for the "normal" Kin troupe, with fights galore and some moral quandaries to boot. Alternately, a Storyteller running another World of Darkness game could have real fun letting the Awakened characters learn they're yet not welcome in the company of werewolves. Consider some voices from the darker side of the portrait....

Those fucking pansies! One of them found me soon after my new pack performed the ritual and got my family involved. Didn't they realize it was kill or be killed among the Sabbat? Hey, sorry, but I'm a survivor. Maybe I didn't ask to become a walking corpse, but I'll learn to deal with it. And I'll claw my way to the top, too, assuming my brother doesn't track me down and shred me for killing Dad. Ooops.

— Bill Caldicott, Lasombra priest, Child of Gaia Kin

The werewolves are a terrible threat to us all, and that's why I've taught my cabal the best ways to put down these poor, mad beasts. When I was a child, I heard horrible tales of them killing humans in droves. Is this what we want? No, the machinations of the Technocracy pale in comparison to the danger and violence of these dogs.

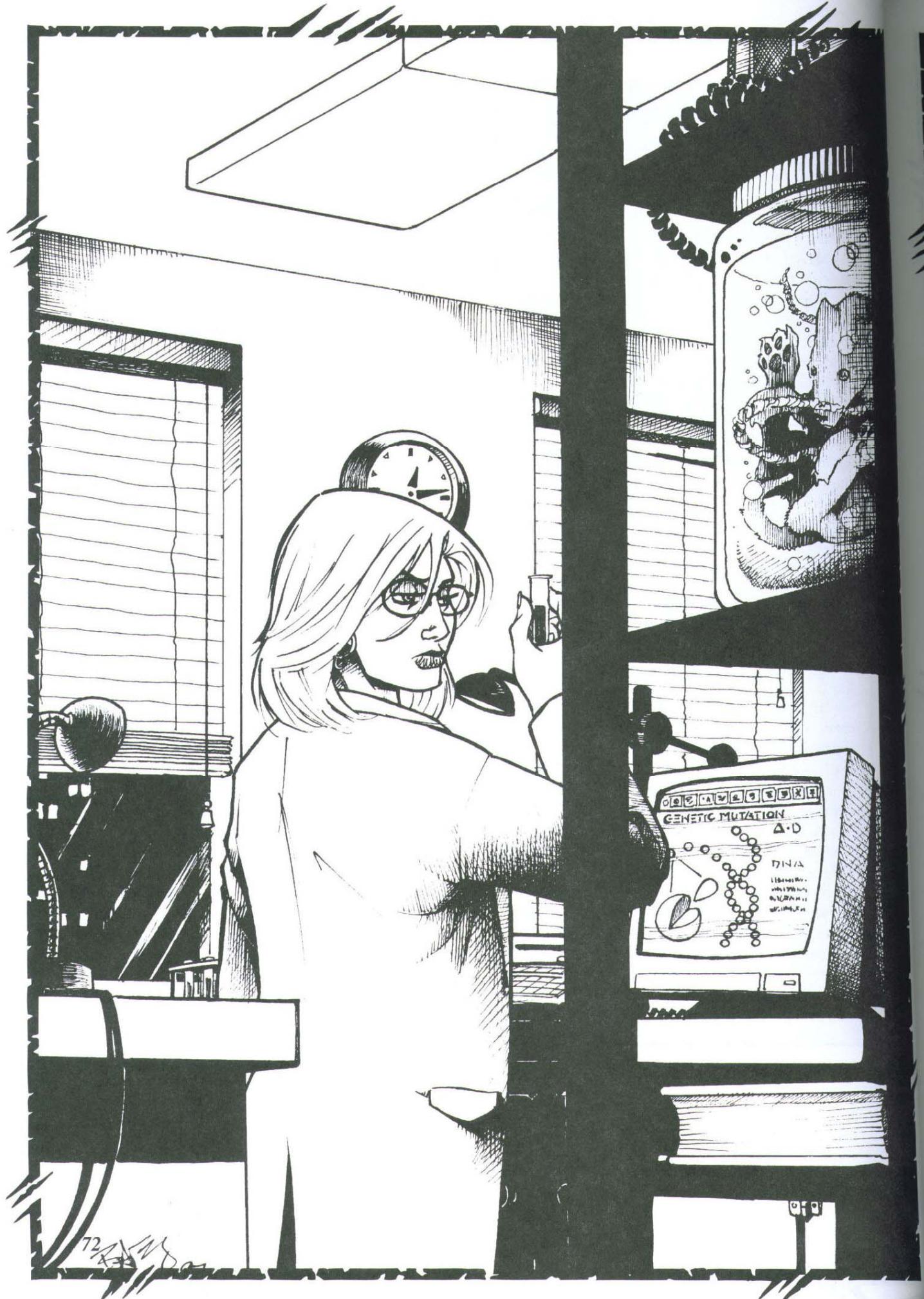
— Clark Rubin, Order of Hermes, Uktena Kinfolk

Yes, they hear my songs and listen with cocked ears, they do. The madness in their eyes, the howls of pain, these are the things I love. My songs are lovelier than those of Orpheus, and all the wild Irish wolves shall soon hear the timbre of my voice quiver across the lonely moors. When their fury explodes, my feast shall begin.

— Judith Holt, Chanteur, Fianna Kin

Some folks call the werewolves Prodigals. Well, I call them a bunch of idiots. Most of the wolf-people have turned their back on the fae, and I say we do the same to them. They're chasing after shadows instead of getting involved in the real fight, and the only thing that makes them almost halfway worthwhile is the palpable fear they hammer into the survivors of their attacks. Not bad eating, that sort of fright. I don't suppose we ought to kill them all, but it'd be nice if we could find a deep pit to throw them into.

— Ileana Gunderson, Unseelie troll, Get of Fenris Kinfolk



Chapter Four: Storytelling

Most people are on the world, not in it.

— John Muir

How do you weave a chronicle around a bunch of mortals in the World of Darkness? That's what this portion of *Kinfolk* seeks to answer. This chapter lays out some essential elements, plot thickeners, conflicts, crossover rules and suggestions for chronicles in historical settings. Remember that the material here won't be perfectly suited to every single chronicle! Take these ideas, build on them and fine-tune them to fit your players, characters and personal views of *Kinfolk* and Garou society.

A word of caution: If you're used to running a *Werewolf* campaign, keep in mind (once more) that *Kinfolk* aren't Garou. Many are tough; some even have magic or psychic abilities at their fingertips. But they still can't take the physical punishment a Garou can. If you constantly throw Nexus Crawlers at *Kinfolk*, the poor humans die in droves; the players will end up weary and unhappy after making up character after character, only to see them squashed. Good fights are lots of fun, and easy victories get boring. But match the *Kinfolk* against foes they stand some chance of defeating, even though winning isn't always assured. They

won't triumph every time, but when they do, victory will be most sweet.

You can also keep players interested by mingling exciting combats with intense discussion and debate. Perhaps the characters are divided by ethical disputes, which leads to good roleplaying. Such conflict presents a great arena for playing up the family connections and obligations between werewolves and Kin. Maybe the characters have frequent "chats" with their Garou relatives over issues of *Kinfolk* rights. In other words, keep a balance between the thrill of combat and the exploration of Garou and *Kinfolk* society. Chances are, you've got players who prefer one over the other; maintaining a balance guarantees everyone a chance to do what they most enjoy.

The *Werewolf Storytellers Guide* has many excellent suggestions for plots, themes, moods and stories. It has a particularly detailed section on historical chronicles (see below). Many of the ideas in that book translate easily to a *Kinfolk* chronicle, so be sure to check it out.

The Troupe

*You are a king, Tristram, for you are one
Of the time-sifted few that leave the world,
When they are gone, not the same place it was.*

— Edward Arlington Robinson, "Tristram"

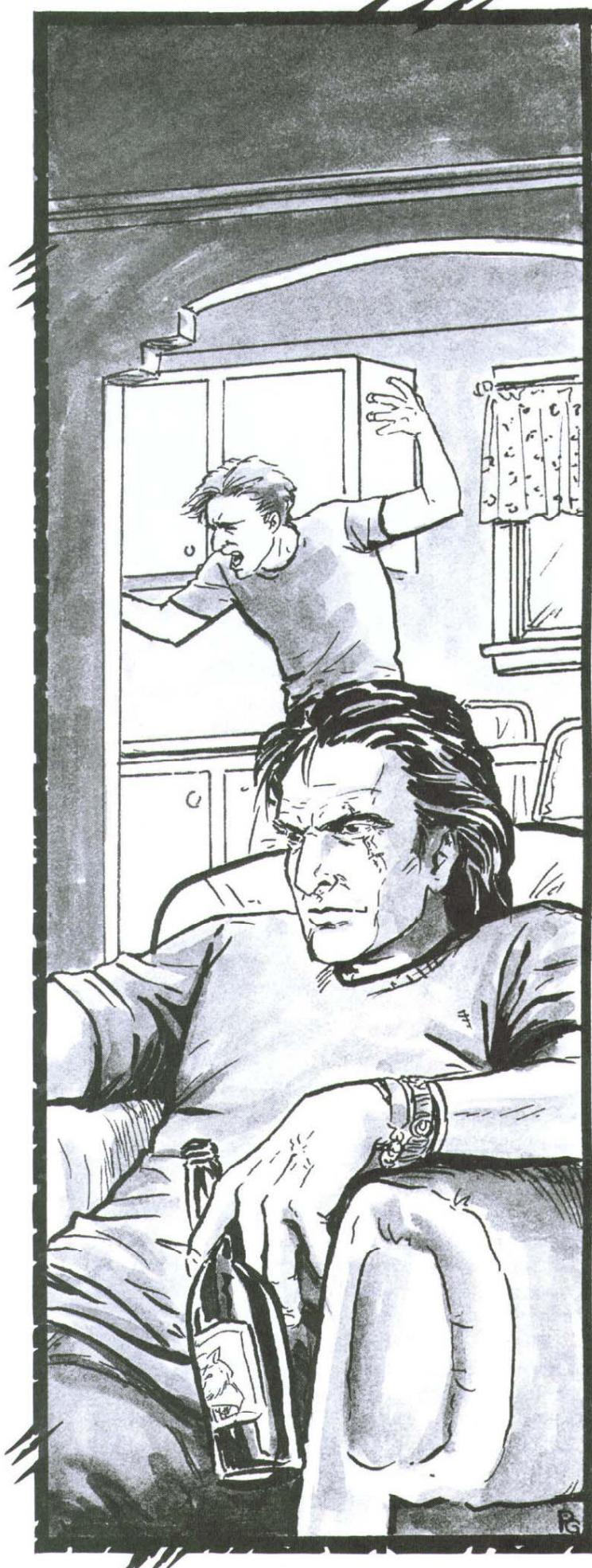
What kind of group do you want to use in your chronicle — all Kinfolk? If so, your stories will often focus on the mortal world. Perhaps the characters are part of a Fellowship, working together to aid their tribes. Alternately, the Kinfolk could all be from one tribe; maybe they're an extended family trying to help their Garou relatives with a specific set of goals. If the Kinfolk are wolves, maybe they're trying to help their pack find a new place to live or avoid confrontation with invading humans.

How about a group that's mostly Kin with some werewolves? Or mostly Garou with a few Kinfolk? Chronicles of this sort can have an interesting balance of stories, from big fights against Pentex to adventures in the Umbra. A mixed troupe of werewolves and Kinfolk gives the characters a chance to talk about what being Kinfolk means...with the werewolves presenting their own case face to face. It can also play up the differences between any young, liberal Garou and their more hidebound elders — if the players' Garou are indeed more egalitarian toward Kinfolk (And they might not be!). Maybe the characters are instrumental in getting both werewolves and Kinfolk to listen to each other and come to a new understanding. Or maybe the pack has to settle temporarily for a lower status as a consequence of their efforts. It all depends on how they handle the situation.

The Garou Perspective

Remember that Garou feelings toward their Kinfolk vary greatly. Some of the werewolves realize the intrinsic value of Kin and want to guard them at all costs. These Garou shield Kin to the extent that the humans (or wolves) wish to escape the cloying, paternalistic protection by any means possible, including violence. Tragic as it may seem, some overprotective werewolves treat Kin as little more than slaves — highly useful property that has worth and, therefore, must have satisfactory food and shelter (but only enough privilege to keep them from rebelling). To these Garou, Kinfolk have a place and a mission; they fulfill a needful purpose but deserve no consideration as thinking, feeling beings.

At the other end of the spectrum are werewolves who really don't give a damn about their Kin at all. Kinfolk could live or die, for all they care; whatever's going to happen is Gaia's will anyway, so why not send Kinfolk against the worst of the Wyrm? These werewolves toss their Kin to the wind, although they're quick to get pissed if the wind blows back in their faces.



Of course, there's a middle ground here, where Garou cherish their Kinfolk as able partners. These werewolves realize that without Kinfolk, the Garou would come to an end. Some are regretful that Kinfolk don't share in Gaia's fullest blessing; others shrug it off as simple fate. The majority might not view Kin as full equals, but they realize that treating them like slaves or mindless cannon fodder is entirely wrong, that Kin are people (or wolves) with needs, feelings and worth in their own right.

So, what about the werewolves in your chronicle? How do they view Kinfolk — as frail valuables to be cloistered, as nobodies, as great allies? What sorts of relationships do they have with the Kinfolk player characters? Get a handle on the perspectives of the Garou you use as Storyteller characters. Ask players with Garou characters to do the same. Their outlooks are going to have powerful effects on how Kinfolk react in nearly every situation.

The Kinfolk: We're Not a Model Minority!

Like the werewolves' viewpoints, Kinfolk perspectives run through a gamut of possibilities. Some Kin are perfectly content with their lot, no matter what it may be; it's Gaia's fate for them. Also, keep in mind how victims of abuse can turn into abusers themselves. Most of the time, a Kin's worldview is shaped by his homelife, for good or ill. He takes his knocks along with whatever meager scraps of praise Garou toss his way. Some Kin grow up believing that they don't deserve any better than what they've got, that maybe they screwed up somehow, and that being treated like a slave or mindless automaton is their punishment.

The opposing camp chokes with venom over its plight. Its members ache for acceptance and strike out in anger when they can't seem to get it. They want to be just as good as the werewolves, and if Gaia didn't see fit to let them Change, well, they'll show her what a mistake she made! They try to be "more Garou than Garou," and generally, all they end up with is a lot of misunderstanding from werewolves and Kin alike.

The "middle-of-the-road" Kinfolk think things aren't bad, but could be better. Generally, they're happy with Garou/Kinfolk relations, but they do get tired of being less than equal. They ask themselves how life, for Kin, could be improved. Some believe that proving their worth is the best option; if we show the werewolves just how valuable we are, they say, eventually they'll treat us like equals. Others push a separatist agenda, whereby Kinfolk would establish their own standards of worth, working for Gaia and the Garou cause, but outside the Garou's direct sphere of influence. Once they've shown (rather than "proved") their equality, they hope the werewolves will welcome them as full partners.

The point never to overlook in Storytelling is that Kin are *family*. While some werewolves may generalize their attitudes about Kin, such views, more often than not, change when the conflicts hit home. A Silver Fang be-

trayed by a Kinfolk may growl and snarl about Kin in general, but is he really going to turn his back on his family? If you think vampire politics are complex, try contemplating family relations for a moment....

Player characters obviously have their own points of view. Do they share Garou outlooks? What about the other Kinfolk in the chronicle? Do they subscribe to the player characters' broad worldviews? Or does their perspective change from situation to situation? How do they get along with the Garou and other Kinfolk? Again, having a pretty good idea how each Kinfolk character feels about Garou/Kin relations allows you to make appropriate responses while telling your tale.

But, as always, remember that Kinfolk (and the Garou as well) are people first, and a demographic group second. Although there are indeed broad stereotypes in either group's outlook, it doesn't mean that you should slap generic viewpoints on characters just because they're members of Group X. If a character believes that the Kin deserve better treatment, think about *why*. Even the most philanthropic people usually have some reason for their goodwill, be it upbringing, personal faith or whatever. People have reasons for acting the way they do, and the reasons behind a character's actions can wind up shaping a story much better than the actions themselves.

Essential Elements

Themes

Themes enshroud stories like the sheer gossamer of a spider's web, invisible, yet always present. They often form the most fundamental base upon which great tales are built, and they impact characters, conflicts, enemies and settings. Themes move stories beyond isolated monster-of-the-week episodes into cohesive sagas. Think of them as the big picture of your chronicle; you can have one theme or several working together to help you develop one-shot stories or long, overlapping story threads. Take a look at the themes below. They present just a small sample of the possibilities for Kinfolk chronicles; chances are, you'll come up with many of your own.

Proving Worth

Maybe the werewolves do stop and say thanks on occasion, but not as often as the Kinfolk would like! In chronicles with this theme, the characters desperately want the Garou to appreciate them and treat them like full partners. So, they're all set to do anything and everything to show the werewolves just how wonderful (and worthy) Kinfolk can be. You can put the characters through a variety of adventures, from straight fights to espionage, or even have them seek ways to get their voices heard. Proving worth involves more than just muscle; it also takes brains and a show of spirit. The challenge for you, as the Storyteller, is to put the

Kinfolk characters in a variety of situations where they can prove themselves...or die trying.

Survival

The world is brutal and cruel, particularly if you're somehow "different." Maybe Kin aren't Garou, but they know too much to lead completely normal nine-to-five lives. In this type of chronicle, keep the characters constantly on their toes and looking over their shoulders. Maintain a high level of paranoia by dropping in red herrings, odd coincidences or chance meetings. Who (or what) is after them? Perhaps the characters have Garou enemies in high places; maybe the threat is some Umbral denizen. Whatever the case, they're engaged in a battle for their very lives; every day that they wake up still breathing is a victory. Perhaps the big enemy's forces don't show up every session, but the characters never know for sure who's friend and who's foe.

Searching for Identity

Kinfolk are often born with their roles set in life: warrior for Gaia, breeding stock and so on. What part do individual personalities and desires play in such an existence? What happens when a Kin's lifestyle choices conflict with her family's hopes and plans? How do Kin deal with the fact that they live in a world that prizes free thinking while they are personally shackled by expectations? This theme focuses on characters exploring who they are and what they want out of life. Perhaps they have no clear road before them, but they want to go on a journey of self-discovery nonetheless. Or maybe they want to find ways to remain loyal and obedient Kinfolk without being just another warm body (in battle or in bed) for the werewolves. Either way, the process involves Kin learning not only about themselves but also about the world and where they fit in it.

The Missionaries

There's a lot of work to be done and somebody has to do it. Why not the Kinfolk? A chronicle with this theme has a lot of fast-paced, daredevil adventures — which isn't to say there's not a place here for good roleplaying, too. These stories do focus on problem-solving, though. If there's a job to be done, whether physically or mentally challenging, the characters get the assignment. Perhaps the Kin take on these tasks to get recognition, but, more probably, they do so because they enjoy the work. Think of stories with this theme as troubleshooting for the Garou, and you should have no problem coming up with lots of adventures.

Plotting

Put simply, plot is really a matter of cause and effect. What are the events of your story? How do your player characters change those events? Do you envision certain outcomes, and if so, how do you manipulate the plot to

meet them? The plot of a good game resembles that of a good book, in the way both move between events, settings, conflicts and characters to a climax and a resolution.

An outline is a great way to keep track of a story's events, causes and effects. Think through the plot sequence; then, write down the events in a rough outline. Consider ways the characters might change your outline and imagine some alternate outcomes. Over time, you'll become a bit more adept at predicting how certain players (and their characters) react in given situations. Outlines are nice because you can be flexible in sequencing the events, especially if players go off on a tangent. If, for example, the players go to the third event you'd planned before the first event, you can easily rearrange things.

Getting Ideas

So, you want to run a Kinfolk chronicle...but what next? Where are you going to find those complex schemes and juicy details that make certain chronicles so memorable? For most Storytellers, the process involves a melange of creativity, resources, luck and player input. You can begin with the germ of an idea, add complications and then set the players free to tie their own nooses.

First of all, listen to what your players want. Are they saying things like, "Gee, it'd be neat to travel to my ancestral home in Tibet and meet my brother, who left home when I was three"? If so, take heed! When players make remarks like this one, they're giving you a bunch of useful ideas; they may not realize it, but they're spouting off their wish list for the chronicle. It's good practice to hear them out and act on their desires when possible.

Supplements can also help with ideas, especially if creative energies are in short supply. Most supplements for *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* are adjustable to include Kinfolk. Take *Project Twilight*, for example. What if the Kinfolk characters must deal with a government investigation? They'll go to jail if they lie, yet they can't exactly tell the truth, either. How can they help maintain the Veil without compromising the Garou?

Finally, don't be afraid to "borrow" from television, movies, books or even other gaming supplements. Did you like the witty way characters were set up in *The Usual Suspects*? When the Borg captured Captain Picard on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, did visions of fomori kidnapping Kinfolk dance in your head? Sometimes, just building on small elements like these can help you run a great game.

(Of course, you probably don't want to repeat all that many elements from any one source; if your players catch on and begin gobibly reciting Picard's dialogue, the horror atmosphere goes to hell. Hollywood shows a distinct knack for mutilating stories to suit its purposes — you might as well return the favor and heavily brutalize any plots you borrow. Your version, unconstrained by concessions like the token happy ending and horribly forced romantic interplay, will probably turn out better, anyhow.)

Visualizing the Scenes

Because most Storytellers picture their games progressing along a fairly linear plot, they find it useful to visualize the scenes much like a movie. Scene one may be in a brightly lit office center, where characters meet their uncomfortable (and thereby irritable) Garou patron. Scene two might put them on a cruise ship; scene three might be at the captain's table, and so on. Remember, though, that not all scenes have to occur in order; all the more reason you should be able to picture and describe clearly each one to the players.

In telling players about the scenes, use a broad range of description. Think about the normal senses: hearing, sight, touch, taste, temperature, and smell. When describing a person, consider both physical and personality traits. Move beyond the color of hair, eyes and skin. In other words, talk about your Storyteller characters in terms that make them individuals. Do the Kinfolk have any special abilities you need to think about, such as ESP? Be ready to describe your characters and setting from this perspective.

Finally, consider the more understated influences of the mind. Beliefs, memories, identities — all shape people's perceptions; they provide filters and lenses for characters to view the world. Consider these filters in describing the people characters meet. Take the multiple parts of each character's

identity into account. A surly, rude, combative Glass Walker might wind up alienating most of the characters — but others might look a little closer and notice his courage and great personal honor. The love-hate relationship that might blossom between the pack and the Glass Walker could wind up fueling several enthralling game sessions.

Expanding the Elements

Let's use the fomori example above and talk about expanding the elements of the plot. You like the idea from the television show and want to adapt it for the chronicle. Say, for example, that a group of relatively normal-looking fomori scientists want to kidnap the characters, turn the poor Kin into fomori, then send them back to the unsuspecting werewolves. Perhaps the "new" fomori carry some sort of pestilence in their bodies that infects other Kin and Garou. As capture and separation of characters is difficult to do well, you decide the Kin won't have any memories of their kidnapping and alteration; they go to bed all snug one night, then wake up a bit late the next morning, feeling like a truck has run over them. Scene one might be the characters getting together for their Friday night poker game, where someone notes that everybody looks like death warmed over. You may want to drop some clues about troubled sleep, strange nightmares and so on.



Within a few days, other Kinfolk start coming down with some horrible flu. Scene two might be a Kinfolk or even a Garou coming to talk to the player characters and see if they're sick too. They can figure out the Kinfolk were the first to get the bug. Scene three could be the Kinfolk trying to uncover the truth. Maybe they know about someone who has psychic powers and can see into the past. If they discover the cure for this wretched illness is the venom from some mythic creature in the Northwest Territory, scene four would involve their making preparations to head to Canada and hunt said beast. Here, you could draw in conflicts between tribes; what Red Talons, Wendigo or Uktenea would tolerate contaminated Kinfolk trespassing on tribal lands? And so on, until you have a cohesive story.

Do you see how the scenes are relatively interchangeable? For example, the Kin may skip scene two and go right to the psychic in scene three. The beauty of an outline is that you can make the switch quite easily.

Putting It Down on Paper

Think at this time about preparation. What Storyteller characters do you need to construct? Do you want brief paragraphs and abbreviated stats, or full write-ups? Will you need maps or floorplans? It's better to be a little

overprepared than not to have a character or setting ready when you need one. Most grocery stores sell houseplans for less than five bucks; they save a lot of planning time.

Instead of an outline, you might prefer to use a flowchart, which lets you keep track of a story's events and characters visually. It also helps show that a story's events are flexible rather than linear. A quick reference chart of the Storyteller characters' important stats is also useful; you can check initiative, Willpower and Health Levels with a quick glance.

Characters

A chronicle is nothing without good characters, both yours and the players'. Characters have their own themes and their own stories to tell about what they hope, dream about and fear. Part of your job is exploring those concepts, making them the central part of the chronicle.

Ask yourself what a character's theme is. Just because he's not a werewolf doesn't mean he can't have an ambitious story to tell. Does he want to prove his worth by siring more Garou progeny than any other Kinfolk in history? Or is he content with running illegal weapons to werewolves and Kin worldwide? What does the character worry about more — his reputation or his family? Don't forget that both characters and their antagonists sometimes come in shades of gray. Not



everyone can be a complete saint or a total demon. What plots can you develop to let the characters tell their stories? Hopefully, you'll get some ideas when you and the players first construct the characters.

Sometimes, the player characters' stories aren't going to make sense for a particular chronicle. If you're running a saga set in the Alaskan wilderness with Wendigo, Red Talon and Black Fury Kinfolk, both human and wolf, just how well is the computer-hacking Glass Walker Kin going to fit in? It's certainly not impossible, but if you'd planned on lots of survival adventures with little or no technology, the Glass Walker Kin may not have much fun.

Always work with the players on developing the characters. Get an idea of how they envision their personas growing and evolving. Techniques like solo games or even "dinner conversations" can really help turn character sheets into complex and interesting Kinfolk.

Settings

Spend time developing your setting. As the Storyteller, the mood and feel of the setting is more or less up to you. Is the world an irredeemably dark place, something like the art deco Gotham City? Is it a weird juxtaposition of normalcy, hidden horror and a spiritual battle between good and evil, as in *Twin Peaks*? A chronicle's setting works closely with its themes, too.

You'll probably want to begin with the characters' own community. Do they live in a big city or a small town? Or is the setting isolated and rural? Either way, think about interesting places and people that will be part of your landscape. Running a historical game (see below) requires a lot more research, but it can be quite rewarding. You may even want to set the game in the players' hometown, with a World of Darkness spin. Who says there isn't something sinister going on under the local mom-and-pop convenience store?

But keep in mind that a setting is only as good as the story and characters within it. A good setting should inspire and enhance the story, not bury it. Work creatively with your material and, as always, talk to your players. Find a balance between setting and saga. The story's the thing, not the bizarre locale of the week.

Conflicts

Nobody said life is easy, and Kinfolk have a more difficult row to hoe than most. Here's a crowd of people who face a mess of problems: their own inner conflicts, pressures from the werewolves, a host of supernatural threats or even just the day-to-day atrocities humans inflict on each other.

Does your chronicle have a major antagonist? If so, who is it? Possibilities include competing Kinfolk, an angry Garou sept, the Progenitors, Pentex, DNA, a government agency or even some vampires. Whoever the antagonists are, they make life miserable for the Kinfolk characters.

The enemies' ultimate goals might be shaming the characters...or killing them outright.

Think about how you introduce the antagonists. Is it just a matter of the Kinfolk being at the wrong place at the wrong time? Did they inadvertently piss off some powerful people? Or have they deliberately made an enemy? Perhaps the characters have several different enemies of varying degrees. For example, the competing Kinfolk might be willing to cooperate in the face of a common threat, such as Pentex.

Villains aren't the only sources of conflict in a chronicle. What about natural disasters? Or the Kinfolk's own frustrations? Throwing a different evildoer against the players every week gets old after a while. When you think the characters need shaking up, take a look at their Natures, Demeanors and Flaws. Is something on a character sheet begging to be brought into the game? Keep conflicts diverse and interesting, and you'll make stories more engaging and complex.

Endings

Tying up the story neatly is a real trick; you'll almost always have tasks undone and complications to resolve in future games. Whenever possible, allow the characters to finish what they've started. It's difficult, for example, to quit playing in the middle of a big fight. By the time the next game begins, much of the momentum is lost.

Keep tabs on who the characters meet and what effect the meetings might have in future games. Did they make a valuable ally by assisting the amnesiac Stargazer Ragabash? Perhaps she can speak of the Kinfolk favorably at the next moot. Conversely, did they insult a respected Silver Fang Kin? Such events have serious repercussions. Contacts and the like are even more important for low-powered Kinfolk than they are for Garou. A Mafia don doesn't have to be a seventh-dan black belt to be frightening — it's all in who you know.

After awarding experience and possibly Renown, take some time to "deconstruct" the game. Did everyone have a good time? What worked well, and what needed improving? Do the players have an idea about what the Kinfolk would like to do next? Chances are, they can put the next adventure right in your lap, if you listen!

Story Concepts

The following story concepts give you a few starting points for games. These are "classic" bits you can use to get a chronicle going quickly. Hopefully, as you become accustomed to running a Kinfolk saga, you'll expand way beyond the typical and trite into stories that are unique and inventive.

Rescue from DNA

A terrible thing has happened! A team of DNA operatives has captured a werewolf...and the Kinfolk have the job of

rescuing him, perhaps with Garou backup if you've got a mixed troupe. The characters need to do some recon, get proper equipment and stage a raid on the DNA complex. They might face genetically altered horrors or just well-trained agents with big guns. You'll need to lay out the DNA complex and decide on the opposition's strength. Here's a nasty trick: Have the captured werewolf "brainwashed," so that he fights his own Kinfolk! This sort of tale might be a good way to bring the characters together in the first place; hey, it's a better excuse than the shoddy old tavern....

Guard Duty

The werewolves ask the Kinfolk to help guard something — it could be a fetish or even a very young Garou or Kinfolk. The problem is, someone (or something) wants whatever they're guarding *very* badly and attacks. If the Kinfolk win, all's well, but if they lose their charge, the Garou angrily demand that they get it back...or else. If the charge is a person, perhaps she runs away from her guardians and leads them a merry chase. The clock is ticking, and the poor Kin don't have much time before the werewolves come to collect.

Friendly Neighborhood Hunters

This sort of story would be ideal for a solo or pair game. The SAD (see *Project Twilight*) or some other government group gets a lead on some unnatural activities that brings them right to the characters' front doors. They might take the Kin into custody and grill them relentlessly. Or, believing the Kinfolk are some kind of violent militia, they may attack first and ask questions later. Will the Kinfolk risk becoming criminals and fight back? With this scenario, you'll need to spend some time developing the hunters and deciding what they really know and what they only suspect about Kinfolk and werewolves.

The Cost of Redemption

The Kinfolk've *really* screwed up this time. Perhaps they accidentally hurt a Garou or other Kinfolk, or they didn't protect something they should've guarded with their lives. Now, they must prove themselves anew to be readmitted to Garou society. Do they have any allies among the werewolves who believe they were poorly treated? On the other hand, maybe someone among the Garou wants them dead; perhaps the Kinfolk failed their task because of a setup. Who among the werewolves (or other Kin) had the most to gain from their exile or deaths? This scenario can include lots of grand speeches and intrigue, as well as a big combat at the story's climax.

Bug Hunt

Every now and then, a huge fight with some critter is just plain fun. If you've run a long series of games with cerebral themes, maybe the players are ready to get down and dirty. Why not have a feral pack of fomori animals crash through the kitchen door during Thanksgiving dinner? The chal-

lenge is that no one expects it; hence, the Kin aren't armed to the teeth. They'll have to rely on their wits to defeat the menace (and save the turkey and dressing). *The Book of the Wyrm* has some ready-made nasties that can really spoil any holiday gathering.

Crossover Guidelines

This is the place where I made my best mistakes.

This is the place even angels don't understand.

— Elvis Costello, "Our Little Angel"

Vampires

Kinfolk may be spiritually "set apart" from the rank-and-file of humanity, but there's no way that a spiritually dead vampire can make that distinction. Kinfolk blood doesn't provide extra sustenance for Kindred, nor does it invoke greater chances for a vampire to frenzy. In the Kindred's view, Kinfolk are no different than any other humans; this perspective includes physical appearance as well as auras. In short, unless a Kindred has a spectacularly high level of Lupine Lore, he isn't even going to know that Kinfolk exist, much less understand their role in werewolf society. But woe to the hungry vampire who slakes her thirst on Kin, or, worse, kills or Embraces one! The werewolves will hunt her down and slay her without mercy. Their vengeance would be harsh against any human who killed Kinfolk; it's a thousand times more terrible against any Leech. Most Garou and their Kin are convinced that the bloodsuckers are Wyrm creatures; thus, their hatred of the Kindred. Such retribution would most likely extend to the newly Embraced Kinfolk childe as well. Only in the most extraordinary circumstances would they allow the new vampire to live. The Garou wouldn't see this act as murder; to them, it would be a mercy, even a kindness, to the fallen Kinfolk.

Ghouls fall into a similar situation. A Kinfolk could probably keep his ghoul status secret — for a while. But eventually, the Garou are going to wonder why he isn't aging or why he's suddenly much stronger. If the Kin wants to keep drinking vampire blood, he runs the risk of becoming Blood Bound. Eventually, a werewolf is going to catch him consorting with Leeches, and then all hell might break loose.

Kinfolk are just as ignorant of vampires as Leeches are of them. They have no special way of detecting a Kindred's presence, even if they know vampires exist. Unless a vampire flagrantly breaks the Masquerade, she can interact with Kin and leave them none the wiser. The rare Kindred who *does* know something about the werewolves might consider drinking from Kinfolk a status symbol or proof of her bravery. Or she might wisely decide that discretion is the better part of valor and steer clear of them!

The plot hooks involving vampires are numerous. The children of Caine are the werewolves' eternal enemies; they possess great power and influence in the cities; they're

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often depraved and involved in various sinister operations — the possibilities are all but endless.

Mages

While most Kinfolk aren't Awakened mysticks, many of them have seen a lot of bizarre happenings over the years. A number of magickal Effects even resemble certain Garou Gifts. Storytellers, therefore, might choose to treat Kinfolk as "enlightened" when determining penalties for vulgar magick and Paradox. Generally speaking, Kinfolk have a greater suspension of disbelief; they're a lot more willing to accept "strange things" than the average person on the street would be. After all, what's a lightning bolt on a sunny day compared to your mother, who can shapeshift into a wolf, or alongside the Bane that ate the baby for lunch?

Like vampires, mages have no special knowledge of Kinfolk; there's no mystick glow about Kin or any such nonsense. However, a mage with aptitude in Spirit, Prime and Awareness might notice the exceptionally rare Kinfolk who possess Gnosis; they may well appear "brighter" or "warmer" to the mage, or even seem a bit "spacey" or "starstruck." Without Werewolf Lore, however, the mystick is going to have no idea what he's looking at.

Plot hooks involving a Kinfolk group with mages can usually revolve around one simple fact: Most mages have some idea that werewolves are out there, but almost all are totally unaware that the Garou have a support network of Kinfolk. As such, the Kin might actually be in better position to get involved in a mage's plot, especially if the mage thinks of werewolves as "stupid animals" and doesn't take their families into account. Saving a caern from Quintessence raiders is always fun, but mages can have some truly intricate motives that seem to involve the Garou only peripherally — at first....

Wraiths

Like most mortals, Kinfolk generally cannot see wraiths, mostly because it's quite difficult for the Dead to manifest in the real world. But because of their general knowledge of the supernatural ("Hey, there *are* such things as werewolves..."), some Kin might be more inclined to believe the cold spot in the corner is the work of the Restless Dead rather than faulty plumbing. Silent Strider Kin, in particular, believe in the power of the Dead and are very curious about hauntings. They'll sometimes travel a long distance to check out rumors of poltergeists or restless spirits, then relay that information to their Garou allies. Most Kin who receive visits from wraiths through dreams take such occurrences seriously. Chances are, they'll report them to a tribe member right away. Such nightly calls and messages might even raise the character's status among the werewolves. On the other hand, Kin don't attract wraiths for any special reasons. Like any other humans, though, they can be part of Passions or Fetters, but these conditions are due merely to their connection with the deceased.





Changelings

The Kithain know a fair amount about the Garou and consider them long-lost Prodigals. They generally enjoy interaction with werewolves, from the eshu with the Silent Striders in the Middle East to the nockers and trolls with the Get of Fenris in Scandinavia. Meetings between the nunnehi and the Uktena and Wendigo tribes were numerous in times past. The grand tales and songs of Garou stir the faeries' souls and remind them of a time of sagas and high adventure. Their knowledge of Kinfolk is more limited; they can't pick Kin out of a crowd (or vice versa) and generally don't understand the Delirium or other factors that make someone Kinfolk or not.

Kinfolk are probably less dull than the average human, perhaps with a Banality rating of six (or in cases of particularly weird Kin, five). Many of them have seen firsthand the wonders of Gaia and the Garou. They're generally more inclined to be creative and receptive to new ideas than the average person on the street. Many Kin have certainly heard of the faerie folk, even if a lot of their facts are incorrect.

Do the ancient oaths of friendship between Kithain and werewolves hold for Kithain and Kinfolk? In most cases, yes, but those oaths won't keep a dapper satyr or sidhe from cozying up to a pretty Kinfolk lady, fully enjoying her charms, then fleeing in the morning!

Kinfolk in Historical Settings

Only the ineducable tyro can fail to sense the presence or absence of wolves, or the fact that mountains have a secret opinion about them.

— Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*

While they require more research and world-building, historical chronicles offer a creative change of pace. Imagine Kinfolk standing beside Garou at some of history's major battles—Hastings in 1066, Constantinople in 1453, Little Big Horn in 1876. (Kinfolk characters are also an interesting way to take the role of the *mortal* in the World of Darkness' history; they may have a trick or two, or even some powerful friends, but it's still a challenge for a human to survive Gettysburg.) Historical chronicles take advantage of player interest and expertise; chances are, you've got at least one history buff in your group! Many Storytellers are reluctant to create historical chronicles because of the characters possibly changing "canon" history. Don't worry about it; instead, immerse the characters in the period's flavor. *The Werewolf Storytellers Handbook*, *Garou Saga* and the "Legends of the Garou" stories in most *Werewolf* books can give you some inspiration.

Ultimately, though, the story is still more dramatic than the time and place. A historical setting should inspire good

stories, and vice versa. No matter how intricate your setting, it's not worth beans if it can't give you a good tale to share. Ask yourself what role the Kinfolk are going to play in the setting. For some settings, they have an obvious place — squires and retainers to medieval Garou knights, family to help run the farm in the Old West. Other times are more challenging, such as prehistory and the Impergium.

If you're concerned about altering the world, ask yourself if the player characters *really* could do anything to hurt the chronicle you've envisioned. If not, proceed apace. If certain historical events have to occur and you fear character intervention, steer the chronicle away from those areas. For example, if it's vital that Gandhi should die despite the characters' ambitions to save him, work the chronicle's events so their rescue attempt becomes more difficult; an attack by tigers, a surprise battle with bandits or even car trouble could thwart them. Don't be afraid to award ingenuity, though; if players come up with a sound plan to save Gandhi, you don't have to stop them merely for the sake of history. You can make their lives difficult in many other ways and probably revamp your chronicle timeline quicker than you can regain your players' lost trust. Finally, be clear to your players about your feelings on changing history. If you're flexible and want them to participate in building an "alternate" world history, let them know. If, on the other hand, you don't want major events changed, tell them so from the start of the chronicle.

Before beginning, do a little research; timelines and maps are essential to most historical chronicles. Start with a trip to the local library. Historical surveys or textbooks are good ways to get an overview of the chronicle's time period. Most general histories have good bibliographies for in-depth study, and many include maps and timelines to compare events worldwide. Take advantage of historical novels and films, too; many cable channels have historical specials and travel shows that can give you a "feel" for your setting. A few books you shouldn't be without include: *The People's Chronology* by James Trager, Rand McNally's *Atlas of World History*, *Cosmos* by Carl Sagan and *A History of World Societies* by Robert McKay. *Connections*, James Burke's television show and book, is a fantastic piece that links together world history, science and art. Finally, don't forget that other roleplaying games often have great historical resource materials.

Prehistory

Historians refer to "prehistory" as the time before great civilizations arose in Egypt, Mesopotamia, east Africa and the Indus Valley. Prehistory roughly dates from 10,000 B.C. to 5000 B.C. Prehistoric societies organized themselves around hunting and gathering; they didn't fight Pentex First Teams, they fought daily for survival. Most tribes were nomadic, until advances in agriculture allowed the building of permanent settlements. Settlements, in



turn, provided for the development of written languages and a more sophisticated material culture.

Magic and spirituality were very important to prehistoric peoples. Archaeological evidence of burial sites shows that even Neanderthal tribes had some concept of an afterlife; their graves contained food, flowers and simple tools for use in the hereafter. The caves of Lascaux and elsewhere show an appreciation for both the aesthetic and the fantastic.

The tribes of werewolves were still forming in what they call the First Days; while distinct, the tribes didn't look much like their 20th century counterparts. Some Garou, such as the Glass Walkers and the Bone Gnawers, didn't even exist; they were part of other tribes, such as the Silver Fangs (see **Bone Gnawers Tribebook** and **Glass Walkers Tribebook**). The Bête (and their Kinfolk) were much more numerous and varied at this time and were apt to be better disposed toward Garou than after the War of Rage. The Garou chose equal numbers of wolves and humans to be their Kin (as usual, the Red Talons were the exception). Kinfolk had few concerns with the Wyrm, which was a threat rather more abstract than a cave lion.

As agriculture created the means for a population explosion, the werewolves (and certain of the Bête) began the Impergium to control the spread of humans. The slaughter spread over three long millennia. Humans chosen as breeding stock, the Kinfolk, were largely spared from the culling, although one tribe would occasionally slay the Kinfolk of another tribe. Some Garou were attracted to the growing clusters of humanity, and so became the Warders of Apes, the progenitors of the Glass Walkers. After the Impergium came the War of Rage, when Garou turned against Bête. Garou and Bête alike dragged their Kin into the fray.

As a Storyteller, center your chronicle on basic themes: life and death, surviving winter's onslaught, fighting huge animals, exploration of the spirit world and so on. In this more primal time, ritual and belief are very important, as is the unity of the tribe. Everyone has to band together for mutual survival. Kinfolk hunt alongside werewolves and, in some ways, have greater equality than in modern times.

Scenarios for the chronicle can revolve around finding food, shelter and the necessities of life. Players find games more interesting if their characters have other people to consider and care about — children, the elderly or the entire village. What about a scenario fighting the "advanced" civilization from the next valley? Maybe these neighbors have better weapons. How can the player characters defeat their enemies and grab these new discoveries? For Storytellers and players interested in the spirit world, how about an ongoing conflict with one of the setting's mythic forces, such as the Great Serpent or Buffalo Spirit? How about a chronicle in the midst of the Impergium or the War of Rage? If players are Kin of the Children of Gaia, perhaps they travel the land and bring a message of peace in hopes of ending the killing.

In fact, one of the most interesting directions to take with this chronicle would be to play an unwitting group of Kinfolk. None of the players knows exactly why the great wolves sometimes come to the village or why they sometimes save villagers from other threats. Nobody knows the names of the strange, beautiful people who sometimes come to a strong young neighbor, stay the night, then vanish once more. If the Garou presence isn't constant (or reliably helpful), the players have to work much harder to achieve their goals. And imagine what the reactions would be like if the players finally discover their true nature....

Probably the best-written books on this period are by Jean Auel; they include *The Clan of the Cave Bear* (also a film) and *The Valley of Horses*. Melvin Konner's *The Tangled Wing* offers a more academic, yet fascinating, look at the development of intelligence, spirituality and biological destiny from the dawn of time. *The Naked Ape* by Desmond Morris is also useful in exploring the connections between biology, prehistory and the soul. Although "caveman" movies abound, *Quest for Fire* is one of the few films about the era worth viewing.

The Dark Ages

Feudalism, religious wars and a sluggish advancement of culture marked the Middle Ages in Europe, from about A.D. 500 to 1450. The fall of Rome created a vacuum of power and knowledge unfilled for hundreds of years. It was a time of superstition and darkness during which humans' worst fears drove them to violence and despair.

Nasty as the Middle Ages might have been, they can be a rich historical setting for your chronicle. Human Kinfolk outnumber wolves two to one. Garou fiercely protect their Kinfolk, an easier task as most Kinfolk go from cradle to grave in the same village. Conflict between Kinfolk of different tribes is more common as population pressures spur migrations and invasions. Perhaps the player characters are Kin from different tribes trying to negotiate some sort of lasting peace. (Or they could just as easily want to slaughter another tribe's Kinfolk, who live just across the river.)

Consider setting your chronicle around life on a feudal demesne; historical India and Japan work just as well for this period as medieval Europe. Kinfolk can be vassals in service to a Garou overlord; they can act as soldiers, farmers or all-purpose agents. What about having Kinfolk fall under suspicion of heresy? **The Inquisition** has some excellent ideas for enemies to confound the players. Alternately, the Kinfolk might be traders on Viking ships or in merchant caravans. This approach gives you a chance to "explore the world" and have interesting adventures in a lot of different places. Remember, too, that other beings, such as the fae, vampires and magi, were present.

Vampire: The Dark Ages provides valuable information for running a chronicle in the High Middle Ages; see Chapter Nine for an overview of Garou society. *Pendragon*,

from Chaosium, deals with Arthurian chivalry and feudal society; the game's Ireland supplement, *Pagan Shores*, is especially good for Celtic settings. GURPS's *Japan* and Gold Rush Games' *Bushido* are helpful for chronicles in the Far East. The single best film is probably *The Lion in Winter*, followed by *Becket* and *Braveheart*. *San Goku Shi* is good for China. Any of Akira Kurosawa's historical movies is highly recommended for Japanese chronicles, particularly *Ran*, *The Seven Samurai*, *Yojimbo*, *Throne of Blood* and *Rashomon*. Sergei Eisenstein's classic *Alexander Nevsky* looks at the battles between the Kievan Rus and the Teutonic knights of Poland.

The Age of Industry

From roughly the end of the 18th century until 1900, a wave of rapid technological advances swept over Europe. It gradually moved to the United States around the 1850s and sluggishly invaded the Far East and Russia by the second decade of the 20th century. The Industrial Revolution totally converted land, power and the way people lived. It began the process of globalization and continued the wholesale slaughter and robbery of people in Africa, South America and parts of Asia.

For most Garou and Kinfolk, it was a nightmare brought to life. Railroads cut a swath across lands that mining had already chewed up and spat out. The turn of seasons and the

rising of the sun no longer set schedules; time was in the hands of overseers and clocks. The wilderness homes of lupus werewolves and wolf Kin dwindled from vast primeval forests to small, scattered patches of land. Urban sprawl, factories and smoke dominated the horizons. The Glass Walkers and Bone Gnawers made great discoveries during the Industrial Revolution, but they faced hard times, too. They and their Kin battled the madness of the Weaver where she was strongest – in the heart of the cities.

Consider setting your chronicle around the change from rural lifestyles to urban. What if Kinfolk suddenly lose their land and have to live in the city? How do they maintain contact, if any, with the Garou? Perhaps they want to preserve the fading wilderness at any cost. They may come into conflict with Black Spirals or even the budding Technocracy. The chronicle also could explore the battles between Kin who support the "good" machine and the ones who want to destroy technology completely.

Books by Charles Dickens (and the movies they've inspired) are perfect sources for this time period; *Hard Times* is particularly good. *Alton Locke* and *The Making of the English Working Class* also show the perspective of the underclass. Set in the late Victorian era, *Young Sherlock Holmes* offers a glimpse into the mindset of the Industrial Age. Other movies show clashes between cultures or between humans and nature, such as *The Far Pavilions* or *The Ghost and the Darkness*.



The Wild West

Manifest Destiny, land rights, mining, railroads, religious freedom — all these components add up to make settlement of the American West a great setting for a Kinfolk chronicle. The Louisiana Purchase and the Mexican-American War opened up new territory, ripe for taking. Or did they? The Wendigo and Uktenea were there long before the Wyrmcomer tribes, as were Dreamspeaker mages. The clashes between Garou tribes certainly affect Kinfolk.

Settlement was a long, hard process. Much like primitive times, people had little to work with; suddenly, families were of tremendous value. Perhaps your chronicle could follow one group of pioneers, werewolves and Kin, as they move westward and make new homes for themselves. Maybe the Kinfolk are frustrated and disillusioned: They head west to get *away* from the Garou, only to find angry Native American tribes waiting to fight them. Maybe the player characters are mixed human and wolf Kin of the Pure Ones, eager to prove their worth and save the land from the Wyrmcomers. Consider, too, that the American West attracted people from China and other parts of Asia, and that the Russians once owned a portion of the Pacific northwest. A Western chronicle could have a broad mix of tribes and perspectives.

The ultimate source for this game is, of course, *Werewolf: The Wild West*. As far as movies, television and books go, take your pick from thousands of classics: Zane Grey, *Gunsmoke*, *The Magnificent Seven* and most Westerns with John Wayne, just to name a few. However, *Pale Rider*, especially in its images of the coming of industry, is one not to miss. The comic *Tex Arcana* spins a tale of vampires, fae and mages in the Old West; it's easy to imagine a similar story with werewolves and their Kin tossed into the fray. And, of course, you shouldn't miss either of the latest *Jonah Hex* miniseries by Joe Lansdale (the authority on the horrific West) — anything entitled *Riders of the Worm and Such* is a must-read for the *Werewolf* universe. Look for the *Hex* compilations at your local comic store.

Animal Kinfolk

The most intelligent of humans would make an impossibly stupid crow and, of course, vice versa.

— Corvi #71, Ascarr

Playing an animal Kinfolk should be challenging, even a little daunting; if it isn't, you're selling the animal short. After all, no one can truly understand what it's like to be another species. Of course, while these generalizations about what goes on in an animal's head are largely conjecture, you have to start somewhere. Here are just a few things to consider when playing a wolf (or any nonhuman).

Animals Aren't Stupid

Animals are as intelligent as they need to be. Can you say a wolf is stupid because it can't work long division or understand not to cross the street against the light? On the other hand, she would likely think humans are hopelessly inept because they would freeze or starve in her territory, completely oblivious to all that's obvious to her lupine awareness.

Imagine the Senses

The vast majority of humans sleepwalk through their lives. Only obvious changes in their surroundings — someone talking, the stoplight changing — warrant attention. In part, people are this way because, in urban settings, stimuli bombard them; it's also because, as dangerous as a city may be, humans enjoy relative security. You don't expect some beast to lunge out of a building and grab you off a crowded sidewalk, and you don't fear starvation just because you're not perceptive or quick. If you buy this book, it can be assumed that you can afford to eat.

Contrast this state with that of tribal humans: All their senses must be alert for them to find food and sense danger. A plainsman would scan the horizon for meat on the hoof, while he subconsciously catalogued spoor on the ground and noticed any noise or stray movement that might betray a big cat waiting in ambush. So it is with a wolf: always moving, weight shifting, eyes scanning, ears turning, nose testing the breeze.

Smell is easily as important as all the other senses together. Wolves can detect animal odors that are days, or even weeks old; more importantly, their discriminating noses can pick apart, identify and classify all the scents they glean from the air. Smell can identify an approaching wolf, as well as details about its health. A "signpost" in the snow can say whether the pack has hunted this part of its territory lately. The wind carrying the scent of deer over the hill announces an opportunity to feast.

A wolf's vision, while not as sharp as a human's, is more motion-oriented and sensitive to dim light; many mammals see further into the blue spectrum than humans, and yellow is weak or nonexistent to them. Their hearing is also keener than that of a human, as they have parabolic ears that swivel to catch sound (infra- and ultra-) in almost every direction.

If you can imagine these senses, now imagine the lack of them. Think what would happen if you suddenly lost your sight. What would be your first reaction? Panic springs to mind; after all, sight is, by far, your most important sense. For wolves, smell is equally as important. A pup may have fits over its first snowfall, when it realizes it can't smell anything. A wolf without a working nose would be just as disadvantaged in his own world as a person with visual impairment is in yours. And the loss of any sense can be lethal in the wild.

proached (they are the largest of wild oxen) found the invasion of its space, um, disrespectful and potentially threatening. Likewise, animals may kill themselves in struggle or simply die of fear when being handled by veterinarians, biologists or caring but ignorant people whose only concern is the creature's welfare.

Other Kinfolk

These short musings about wolves hardly touch the nuances of the animal world; each of the other Changing Breeds has its own share of complex details. Bastet and Gurahl, for example, encompass different species, with diverse abilities and behaviors. Here, then, are just a few words of advice for a few other animal Kinfolk. For more information, check the bibliography in the Introduction.

Bastet

Most cats are built for short-term power and speed; their typical method of hunting is stealth and ambush, as opposed to the long chases of the wolf pack. Most big cats (with lions being a glaring exception) live and hunt alone or in small family groups. Felines are exclusively meat-eaters, their teeth being designed strictly for holding and shearing flesh.

Some behaviorists describe cat attack instincts as "hardwired" compared to the instincts of wolves or other predators. Thus, they're more likely to react instinctively when a stimulus presents itself. Examples related to human attacks include joggers (seen as running prey) or someone kneeling or bent over (exposing the head and neck, a favorite strike point). In India, where tiger attacks are common, some villagers wear masks on the back of their heads, with the idea that big cats don't attack prey that faces them. This theory of hardwired behavior goes far in explaining why, in North America, cougar attacks on humans are on the rise while attacks by healthy wild wolves are unknown.

Corax

Ravens (and the other corvids, such as crows and magpies) are highly intelligent birds; what's more, they show a cognitive ability that humans actually recognize and can relate to. Their grasp of cause-and-effect relationships is advanced, as are their memory capacity and problem-solving abilities. Furthermore, corvids enjoy keen powers of observation.

Ravens may fly alone or in small groups, but once they spot a dead animal, they gather from far and wide and call until predators (usually wolves or bears) tear open the carcass and have their fill. Then, the birds descend and feast.

Gurahl

There are eight bear species scattered throughout Asia, Europe and the Americas; the most common, by far, are the black, brown and polar bear species. From these groups come the bulk of Gurahl animal Kinfolk.

Other Animal Kinfolk

Generally speaking, building animal Kin characters among the other changing breeds works much like constructing wolf Kinfolk. Excepting the smaller critters such as crows, rats and foxes, Attributes will generally be strongest in the Physical category and weakest in Manipulation. The lowest Ability rating will usually be Knowledges. Use some common sense here and do some research on the animal in question; crows and ravens, for example, have extraordinary eyesight. Think about how you can best reflect that feature in terms of the Attributes and Abilities.

The following are *sample* Traits for animals. You'll want to have some individual variations among your characters, of course.

Bear

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5, Charisma 3, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Intimidation 1

Skills: Melee 2, Stealth 1

Knowledges: Enigmas 1

Willpower: 4

Attack: Claw for 7 dice; bite for 6 dice

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Move: Walk/Run: 5/20

Crow

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Dodge 2, Expression 1, Intimidation 1

Skills: Performance 1, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Linguistics 1

Willpower: 3

Attack: Claw or peck for 1 die (in desperation)

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -5, Dead

Move: Walk/Run/Fly: 1/2/20

Lion

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 0, Appearance 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2

Skills: Intimidation 4, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Enigmas 1

Willpower: 5

Attack: Claw for 5 dice; bite for 6 dice

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Move: Walk/Run: 10/30

Bears are curious creatures that inspect noises, objects or odors to determine whether things are threats, food, or just something to play with. They're generally omnivorous (the polar bear being the exception) and are more prone to scavenge meat than to kill it themselves. Bears are generally solitary, although they tolerate each other when there's a major food source to be had, such as during a salmon run or at a garbage dump.

Mokolé

Alligators and crocodiles rely on an ambush hunting strategy. They wait for hours with only their eyes above water (or underwater entirely). Without warning, they barrel out of the water, latch onto an unfortunate pig or deer (or dog or person), drag their quarry in and drown it. Gators have been shy of humans, but in unhunted regions they see people as just another prey species. Tourists feeding gators is a prescription for trouble. Like most reptiles, crocodilians aren't very bright, and might not be much fun to roleplay.

Nuwisha

Eat more mutton. One million coyotes can't be wrong.

— Bumper sticker

Coyotes are possibly the most successful wild canid. Their cunning and wariness in the face of extreme persecution have allowed them to increase their range while other predators have been driven back. Their yipping howls echo from Alaska to Mexico, in every state save Hawaii. Some coyotes claim territories in suburban areas.

Smaller than *canis lupus*, these "brush wolves" never run in packs. Their keen senses warn of danger, and they learn quickly. It's rare for a coyote to fall for the same trick twice.

Ratkin

Around 80 species of rat exist, and some variety of rat exists on every continent except Antarctica. Aggressive, omnivorous and prolific, these small rodents have keen senses and much physical prowess. Rats are quick and adaptable, and generally, the females are more hostile than the males. The biggest problem with rats is that two species in particular, the black rat and the Norway rat, carry some vicious diseases, such as bubonic plague, rabies and typhus.

Most rats live in long, branching tunnels; they're adept at digging and getting into out-of-the-way places. When agitated, larger rats have been known to attack farm animals and even humans.

Kitsune

Foxes are nocturnal animals genetically related to dogs and jackals; they live primarily in North America, Europe, Asia and Africa. However, like the Kitsune themselves, the Nine-Tails' actual Kin are usually limited to Asia, or to a few areas where Kitsune have recently migrated. Their

general habitats are woodlands and plains. Foxes have survived despite fur-trapping, hunting and poisoning. Most of these curious and spirited animals dwell in burrows, hollow stumps or crevices in cliffs; their preferred meals include small herbivores, but foxes also like to eat insects, birds, frogs or berries. Common fur colors include red, gray, white and black. Silver foxes are rare, save on specialty fur farms.

Equipment

Some of the equipment below (especially the fetishes and talens, most of which require Gnosis) is rare among Kinfolk. Players should spend the appropriate Background points during character creation and check with their Storyteller before assuming possession of any special equipment.

Fetishes

Fetishes first require attunement through a Gnosis roll (difficulty is fetish's Gnosis rating); only one success is needed. Afterward, anytime the Kinfolk calls upon the fetish's powers, he must make another Gnosis roll (same difficulty) or spend a Gnosis point. (See pp. 184-185 and pp. 273-275 of *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* for more information.)

A few unusual fetishes can be made just for Kinfolk, although this arrangement usually takes more negotiation on the Theurge's part; the spirits within accept a battle of will (a Willpower roll or spending a Willpower point) instead of Gnosis, both for attunement and use. The difficulty is still the Gnosis rating. Any Kinfolk may use these items; they are specially prized and are often family heirlooms.

Horn of Distress

Level 1, Gnosis 3

Only in times of dire need do Kinfolk wind these horns. Such horns vary in appearance according to culture; most bear tribal markings. This fetish uses Willpower instead of Gnosis. When blown, a horn alerts all werewolves within a 10-mile radius. Whether they choose to come or not is their affair, but they know the sound of the horn means trouble. Most often, these horns contain Peacock-spirits; a few hold spirits of Air.

Amulet of Kinship

Level 2, Gnosis 5

Garou bestow this fetish upon honored Kinfolk as a symbol of protection and service. All Garou the wearer meets instantly know her to be Kinfolk of note. Of course, the object's emanations can also be detected by mages and spirits, not to mention Black Spiral Dancers, who are always looking to increase their numbers....



The Amulet of Kinship must be activated by the werewolves (Gnosis roll) when it is given to the Kinfolk; after that, no roll is necessary. The amulet doesn't function if worn by anyone other than the intended recipient.

An amulet's appearance and construction vary by tribe, but the appropriate tribal glyph is always engraved somewhere upon the item. To create the fetish, an Ancestor-spirit must be bound into the device.

Klaive Hammer

Level 3, Gnosis 5

Klaives are difficult for werewolves to make; while a Theurge binds a spirit to the weapon, a skilled Kinfolk with Gnosis sometimes forges the klaive itself. A Klaive Hammer allows the Kinfolk to craft a klaive so perfect of form that the summoned spirit may be pleased to accept permanent binding within the fetish (the Theurge or other summoner must still successfully call the spirit). The crafter must spend a point of Gnosis when using the hammer to forge a klaive.

To create a Klaive Hammer, one of the following spirits must be bound into a hammer touched by the crafter: Balance, Light or Fire. Each Klaive Hammer is uniquely attuned to its owner; however, if freely given by the old owner, a new owner may also attempt attunement to the hammer.

Talens

Talens differ from fetishes in that they have one use only. No attunement is necessary, though the user must still make a Gnosis roll or spend a Gnosis point (or Willpower in some cases) to activate the talen. (See pp. 184-185 and pp. 273-275 of *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* for more information.)

Test Dial

Gnosis 3

This useful talen allows a character to determine whether a person is Garou or Kinfolk — assuming the character can obtain a fecal or blood sample. It looks like a simple test tube with a stopper. The tester drops or pours her sample into the vial, seals it, shakes it, spends a Willpower point and within five seconds, she has a thick crimson glop (Garou), a small amount of brownish powder (Kinfolk) or nothing (anybody else, no matter what other supernatural associations the person might have).

Any of the following spirits must be bound into a normal test tube to create the fetish: Ancestor, Divination or Crow.

Hero's Mead

Gnosis 5

This talen is a dry, herbal mixture in a small bottle or bag. The user adds water, mixes and drinks while making a Gnosis roll or spending a Gnosis point. If successful, she finds herself with twice as much physical strength as before.

(up to a maximum of five dots). The additional strength lasts for one scene (one fight, for example). To make the talen, the creator must mix special herbs in a container, then bind a Thunder-spirit to the simples.

Long Whispers

Gnosis 7

No matter where a recipient might be, he can receive a brief written message (a paragraph or about five full sentences) via this talen; he can read the note even while in the Umbra. The talen itself looks like a sheet of smooth, blank vellum. The user writes down the message, addresses (by name only) the note, then activates the talen with Gnosis. The notepaper blows out of her hand as if by an unseen wind. After one scene, it comes into the recipient's possession in much the same way. To create this talen, a Dove-spirit or Pigeon-spirit must be bound into high-quality vellum paper.

Dire Call

Gnosis 9

This talen looks like a slender white stick, perhaps as long as a soda straw. When the user snaps the stick in two and spends his Gnosis, a call goes out to the nearest single Garou. This talen differs from the fetish Horn of Distress in that the werewolf must come once the talen is activated. It's risky, though, because the talen's power doesn't distinguish between tribes or breeds. A Kinfolk could break the stick and summon an enraged Red Talon or a Black Spiral Dancer! In any case, he should have a damn good reason to call on the Garou. A Lune must be bound into a birch stick to make this talen.

Other Equipment

The sample equipment below is a little less standard than basic weapons or survival gear; getting these more unusual items calls for an investment in the Equipment Background. Players and Storytellers should negotiate what equipment is available according to points in the Background. Streetwise or Contacts is also useful in such acquisitions. For other suggestions on specialized equipment, see Chapter Two.

Silver Bullets

Silver bullets can cause unsoakable, aggravated damage to Garou, depending upon a werewolf's breed and form (see *Werewolf*, p. 198). Furthermore, silver is relatively cheap and easy to work with; with some practice and the right equipment, Kinfolk could make silver bullets in the privacy of their own homes! They're great weapons against Black Spirals...or relatives. For this reason, any Garou is going to look askance at Kin who carry around bandoleers of silver bullets. Some werewolves even gut first and ask questions later; it's a good idea for Kin armed with silver bullets to

Sample Equipment Costs (Background Points)

Depending upon a character's resources and reasons, certain items may be easier or harder to find. The following chart gives the Storyteller a range of Background point costs for some sample items.

Silver bullets	• to ••
Kevlar vests	• to •••
Pharmaceuticals	••• to ••••
Herbal medicines	•• to ••••
Bugs	••• to ••••
White noise generators	••• to ••••
Tasers	•• to ••••
Pepper spray	• to ••
Silencers	••• to ••••
Data shredder	•••• or •••••
Encryption chip	•••• or •••••
Cortex bomb	••••• (and a good story!)
Highly toxic poison	••• to ••••

explain quickly what they're packing and why. Keeping the bullets hidden might cause serious health problems.

Herbal Medicines

"Folk" healing remedies are generally well respected among werewolves and Kinfolk; herbal medicines are the most common of this type. A packet of herbal medicines from a skilled pharmacognosist (perhaps one specializing in Garou and Kinfolk healing) is quite valuable. Herbal medicines come in a variety of forms (teas, syrups, compresses, poultices, ointments, etc.); uses range from soothing rashes (with aloe) to reducing high blood pressure (with hawthorn). Some herbs, such as nightshade, are poisonous (see below). Players who spend points on the Equipment Background can assume their characters' medicinal herbs are safe and of fine quality. The Storyteller and player should decide the type of herbs a character possesses.

What about aconite, commonly called wolfsbane? For starters, it's a deadly toxin, even in tiny doses. Black Furies have long told tales about Hecate killing her father and Medea murdering Jason with aconite. Other tribes used it in liquid form to euthanize old and infirm Kinfolk or to coat the tips of weapons. It was also a deadly weapon if put into an enemy's water supply. Mystics swore it made an excellent flying potion in combination with belladonna — assuming the dosage was correct.

Aconite, when ingested, slows the heart and lowers blood pressure; the herb still sees medicinal use in China and India. Applied to the skin, it produces numbness and a tingling sensation. Even though the plant resembles wild parsley or horseradish, it's not. Death can occur in as little as 10 minutes, perhaps even among Garou.

For more information on aconite and other medicinal herbs, see Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs, particularly pp. 276-293, which detail healing with herbs.

Bugs

Bugs are listening devices; they come in all shapes and sizes. Some are tiny radio signal transmitters; others are small microphones. Most need to be in the immediate vicinity of a conversation, though more powerful bugs can "listen" through walls. Sometimes, a person wears a bug willingly, so her conversation can be monitored or recorded. Generally, the smaller and more powerful the bug, the more points it requires in the Equipment Background. An extremely sophisticated device might have both aural and visual capability.

White Noise Generators

Like bugs, white noise generators can be simple or sophisticated. Their purpose is to "jam" a signal, whether from a bug or another sort of communication apparatus. The simplest variety emits a high-pitched radio signal that blocks a bug's transmission; others operate on different wavelengths and have much longer ranges. Werewolves in Lupus, as well as normal wolves, can hear certain white noise generators and probably track their locations.

Nonlethal Weapons

Just because a weapon or device is nonlethal doesn't prevent it from causing pain and trauma. Tasers and pepper spray are probably the most common personal protection devices; you can pick them up at hardware emporiums, law-enforcement supply houses or specialty sporting goods stores. Tasers deliver agonizing electrical shocks and come in two basic designs: the hand-to-hand version, which requires the user to touch the assailant with the taser prongs, and the long-range variety, which shoots out a pair of pronged wires to shock the target. Because these prongs penetrate flesh and cause more damage, this latter version is generally available only to law enforcement agencies. Costs, styles and voltages vary, but rest assured, most people lose their resolve after getting hit with a taser.

To a creature that relies on its sense of smell, pepper spray means complete debilitation. Even a tiny whiff causes watery eyes, harsh coughing, sore throat and loss of olfactory sense. These effects can last for hours. Worse, for werewolves, pepper gas tends to linger in the air for some time; if, for example, a canister erupted in a den or near a caern, the place would be temporarily uninhabitable. The effects of pepper spray, simply put, make the target miserable. (Author's note: These are the words of an accidental spraying victim! Trust me, I couldn't talk or stop coughing for well over a day).

Concertina wire, or coiled barbed wire, is a nasty addition to normal security measures. It comes in flat coils; to

deploy the wire, purchasers must wear heavy, steel-plated gloves. Most users place the wire in three coils, two layers covered by a third. The only safe way to cross the wire is on a plank of some kind. Otherwise, both flesh and fur get cut to pieces. Now, just imagine what silver-plated concertina wire would do to an unwary werewolf....

Silencers

Contrary to popular belief, silencers can't really sound-proof firearms. They make firing less noisy but never totally silent. Silencers work by baffling the noise and bleeding off gas from the exploding gunpowder, which lowers pressure in the barrel. This modification also causes the bullet to travel at a subsonic speed and not break the sound barrier (bullets usually travel about 1,100 feet per second, creating a small sonic boom in the process). Silencers work best on bolt-action and dropping-block guns; semiautomatics with silencers are quiet but certainly not silent. Making revolvers silent is practically impossible, as it's much more difficult to cover the gaps between the gun barrel and the cylinders releasing gas. Moreover, multiple shots with a silenced gun tend to be less accurate, as the weapon gets hotter and hotter. A talented gunsmith could probably build a nearly silent weapon, given some time, but some accuracy would be sacrificed (along with a fair bit of money), and the user would still have to cope with a permanently altered (and highly illegal) firearm.

For more information on firearms, check out Michael Newton's *Armed and Dangerous*. It's a great introduction for roleplayers totally unfamiliar with guns and ammo.

Computerized Goodies

Glass Walker Kin may have access to some higher-tech computer equipment and "smart" tools. Data shredder programs fit the name: when inserted into a floppy drive, they destroy the hard drive, completely and irretrievably. Encryption chips prevent would-be hackers from stealing information, while worm programs bypass computer encryption. For a nastier twist, consider ensuring Kinfolk loyalty with a cortex bomb. A remote control triggers the bomb, which is surgically implanted in the skull; it's guaranteed to kill or permanently impair its target.

Poisons

Poisons come in many forms (liquid, powder, gas, salve) from numerous sources (animals, plants, industrial chemicals or even medicinal drugs). Even "antidotes" for classic poisons like arsenic and cyanide are often poisons themselves; one antidote for strichnine, for example, is succinylcholine, a dangerous paralytic drug similar to curare. Most poisons have a toxicity rating; the lower the number, the greater the amount of a poison is needed to kill a victim. A poison with a rating of two, such as Tylenol, requires a large quantity to be lethal. Hemlock, with a toxicity rating

of six, is deadly even in small doses. Of course, age, health, body weight and so on play a role in this equation.

Many poisons are on the shelves at hardware stores: cationic detergents, methanol, naphthalene (moth balls), potassium permanganate and turpentine. Others, like Barbados nuts, nightshade, or snake venom, might be in the backyard. Many pharmaceuticals, including codeine or digitoxin, can be used as poisons; hospitals keep careful control of these drugs.

Possessing certain poisons is illegal; moreover, a lot of poisons are hard to obtain in the first place. Players may need to spend Background points on Equipment (see Chapter Two) if they want something restricted or unusual (see Herbal Medicines above). For suggestions on making up unique poisons, see *Deadly Doses: A Writer's Guide to Poisons* by Serita Stevens and Anne Klarner.

Story Ideas

These basic "seeds" give you a sampling of possible stories for Kinfolk characters. Use them or adapt them as you see fit to suit your chronicle.

Hidden in the Hills

Deep in the hills of Appalachia, immigrants from northern Scotland and their descendants have farmed the land since the late 1700s. Within their veins flows blood from ancient Caledonia and Scandinavia, and not a little of it from the Fianna, the Get of Fenris and a tribe almost forgotten. Through Gaia's will or an oversight on the Wyrm's part, a wonder occurs here. Whether or not this miracle survives is up to the player characters.

Word comes to the Kinfolk that large numbers of cattle and sheep are disappearing without a trace. Perhaps the characters have relatives in Appalachia; they may even own land there that they rent to other Kin. If the characters are "troubleshooters" for their tribe(s), they might hear of the animal disappearances through a Fellowship or simply via the media. Maybe the Garou command them to go see what's happening. Whatever the case, they'll investigate.

What's going on is that a young girl has just gone through her First Change. She's clueless about what's happening, and worse, she's had to run away from home. Her uncle, who raised her after a tragic and fiery automobile accident killed her parents, is now trying to murder her! The girl doesn't understand the truth, that her uncle is a former Fianna Kinfolk turned Black Spiral and that she herself is a genetic throwback with some of the blood of the White Howlers. The girl survives on the run by taking the occasional sheep or cow, in a land that hasn't seen wild wolves in over 100 years.

The uncle calls in the Black Spirals, and they're frantically searching for the girl. Who gets to her first — the Wyrm-ridden Spirals or the Kinfolk characters? What about the angry farmers, who call in a special investigator





from the Department of Agriculture? (Yes, they have the same legal powers as any special agent). Can the Kinfolk save the girl and keep the Veil intact? How might they fare against a ferocious group of Black Spirals? The interesting twist for the Kinfolk is that, unless they're incredibly well-versed in Garou Lore or tales of the Wyrm, they're going to have *no clue* about the girl's heritage. Their mission is to rescue the girl and get her to safety among a tribe that will take her in (possibly Black Furies, Children of Gaia, Fianna, Get of Fenris or Glass Walkers).

Once Upon the Dreamtime

A Glass Walker Ahroun from Sydney, a Shadow Lord Philodox from Melbourne, a Fianna Theurge from Brisbane — young, unproven striplings all — have disappeared without a trace either during or before their Rites of Passage. It's as if they simply vanished into thin air. Only the Uktena from the Sept of the Waking Dream (see *Caerns: Places of Power*) have lost no one in the past year. The other tribes are looking with suspicion and anger toward the Uktena and their Kin. The Uktena's secrecy is no help in the matter.

If I Had a Hammer

Just for readers with questions, let's recap the status of the White Howlers. For a character's perspective, check out Chapter One, as well.

While it's possible that a child of White Howler blood may be born among Kinfolk, Black Spirals or even Garou, the kid isn't a White Howler in any meaningful sense of the word. Her fur is white, and she sort of resembles a Pict (for anyone who recognizes a Pict on sight) — that's it. No special Willpower rules or Background restrictions apply. A tribe is a *lot* more than a bloodline and some random genetics. For starters, the White Howler's tribal totem, Lion, no longer recognizes the tribe as existing, which means no unique tribal Gifts, no special connections with the totem and, essentially, no tribe.

So, in short, any recrudescence "White Howlers" have generations to go (and a *lot* of luck to boot) before they could resurrect the tribe or dredge up any forgotten lore or Gifts (figure *at least* a century or three to rebuild their numbers). If a cub of White Howler blood is lucky, werewolves of another tribe take her in and make her part of their family. For all intents and purposes, the cub becomes a full-fledged member of that new tribe. Adding a story seed such as the one described here can lend a mournful tone to your chronicle, but it shouldn't be construed as "Return of the White Howlers." *Quod erat demonstrandum.*

In all truth, the Uktena are just as perplexed, but are loath to admit it. What no one realizes is that the disappearances are the work of a Bunyip Kinfolk from the Aranda tribe of aborigines, a *wirinun* (medicine man) named Karambal. The *wirinun* had visions from the Rainbow Serpent that led him to a powerful fetish, a digiridoo that sends Garou to the heart of the Dreamtime. The missing werewolves aren't dead, but they may as well be, for they'll never find their way home unaided, thanks to Karambal and the fetish. Even a powerful Theurge would have difficulty rescuing the youngsters from the swirling eddies of the Dreamtime.

Karambal is not a violent man; he merely believes that banishing these Garou helps atone for the sins of their forebears in Gaia's eyes. He also has a faint hope that, during their journeys in the Dreamtime, they'll find a means of speaking to the long-dead Bunyip and perhaps send messages to him or other Kinfolk and Garou through dreams. The *wirinun* is old and wise in his own way; he understands the power of Gnosis and uses it carefully. He has spared the Uktena because they're working hard to discover the secrets of the Dreamtime and the Bunyip.

The player characters can get involved in several ways. Perhaps they come as envoys to visit the Uktena, bearing messages or gifts from their tribe. The Kinfolk could be in one of the aforementioned cities when a Garou disappears; maybe the Garou is related to one of the Kinfolk. A character with certain Numina may see the events in Australia unfold in a dream — prompting him to gather everyone for a trip down under. Once they arrive, they might offer their help to the other tribes. The dilemma, of course, is what to do about Karambal. Do the tribes want to kill him, as they did the Bunyip? Or do they grant him mercy? The Kinfolk are in a unique position to understand both sides of the issue and possibly turn the tide one way or the other.

Father of the Bride

What an honor that a high-ranking tribal leader asks the player characters to escort his Kinfolk daughter as she travels to meet her fiancé. What a pain in the ass that the woman is a raging harpy. The gang has a long road trip to suffer through, until they stop for gas and get jumped by a shitkicker Black Spiral Dancer and his two nasty Kin brothers. They're pretty sad and weak as Spirals go; the characters can probably whip them real good. But before the victory is complete, the Dancer

throws a Kiss of the Wyrm dart (see *Freak Legion*) at Daddy Ahroun's little darling...and suddenly she's a seething pillar of fomori terror. Sure, the characters can (gladly) bonk her on the head to keep her quiet, but who's going to heal her? Curing the poison requires a Rite of Purification. The Kin would be idiots to show up at the wedding (only two days hence) and ask for help! They're going to need assistance from another quarter.

Perhaps the Kin have heard of mages and their vast powers; their desperate search could turn the session into an interesting crossover with *Mage: The Ascension*. Maybe one of the characters knows of a Ronin, and perhaps the outcast is familiar with the Rite of Purification. The characters may want to resort to werewolves outside their tribe, even though the price for assistance and silence might be heavy.

In any case, they're fighting the clock in more ways than one. Should they fail to deliver the bride healthy and on time, her father (and probably the rest of her tribe) will really hurt the poor group.

Wet Job at Midnight

Something unthinkable happens: One of the Kindred Embraces a Kinfolk. Sadly, but with absolute resolve, the tribe demands the new vampire's destruction. The Garou want the killing to be quick and merciful. They give the job to a trustworthy and unflappable group of assassins — the player characters.

The complicating factor is that at least one of the Kinfolk has a reason to be reluctant. Perhaps the Leech is an old friend, lover or even a relative. The Kinfolk character understands all the reasons why the Leech must die, but none of them stop her from having second thoughts. If the vampire pleads for his life, it makes the killing all the more difficult. Maybe he's ashamed and horrified at what's happened, but self-preservation is a strong instinct.

What neither the werewolves nor the Kinfolk realize is that they might be stepping on some powerful Kindred's toes. What if the new vampire is a prince's childe or the progeny of a Justicar? The neonate's death might start a war no one wants.

Whatever results, this story is emotionally loaded. From a Garou viewpoint, executing the vampire Kinfolk is absolutely the right thing to do. Yet it shouldn't be an easy task, physically or psychologically. Even a neonate vampire is no easy mark, especially not one desperate to save himself.



Appendix: *Blood Relations*

Templates

While many Kin play all-but-invisible roles in Garou affairs, many more are less content with being vital — but overlooked — cogs. Many of the latest generation, especially in modern Western cultures, have chafed at the thought of playing the same thankless roles as their parents. Even Kinfolk who are loyal to the Gaian ideals find themselves wanting to help more, to do greater things, especially if there's a chance they might finally be recognized for their efforts.

On the flip side, more and more Kinfolk are discarding the notion that they should follow in their families' footsteps. Many, filled with bitterness toward their lot and the lot of their parents, embark on their own paths. All too often, these wayward children find themselves on the other side of the battlefield, working against the efforts of their Gaian relatives. These bad seeds often prove very dangerous to the Garou, simply because they know so much.

The following templates detail a few possible roads that Kinfolk might walk. They might be quick-start characters for your chronicle, or they might be Storyteller characters who wind up having as great an effect on your stories as do Garou. Whatever their role, though, these Kin aren't to be ignored. They have too much to offer — or pose too much of a threat.

Politician

Quote: *They say the people get the government they deserve. Well, they deserve better!*

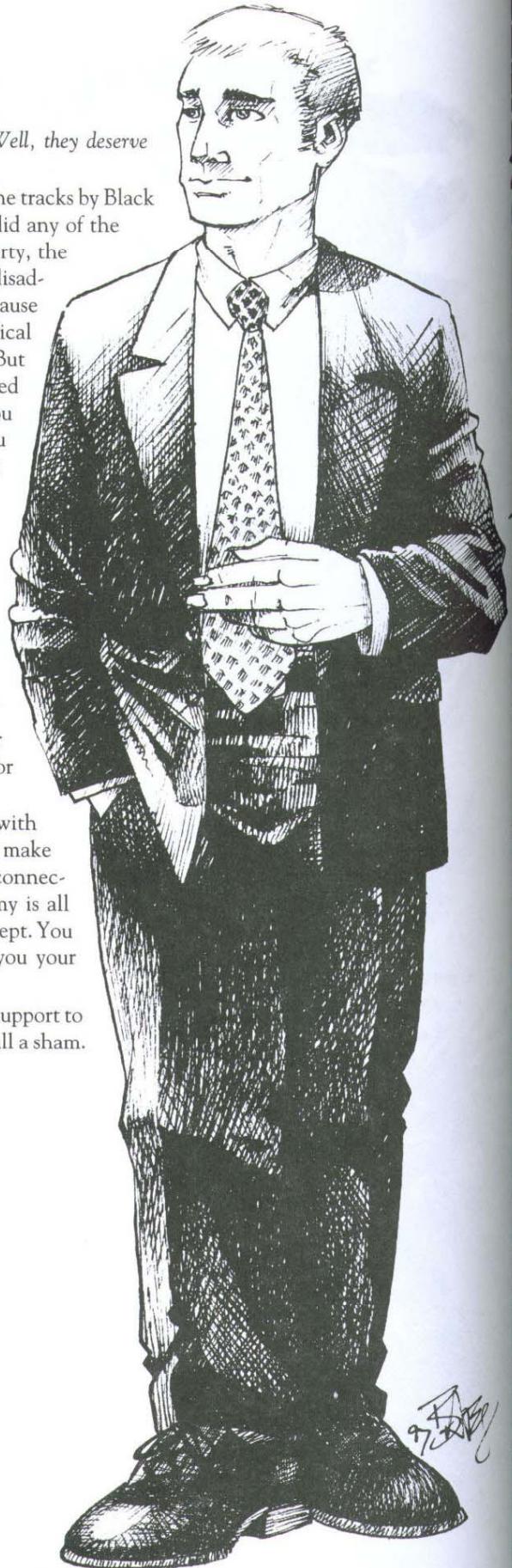
Prelude: Raised within spitting distance of the wrong side of the tracks by Black Fury Kinfolk, you got quite a different view of the world than did any of the good-old-boy politicians who run the system. You saw the poverty, the humiliation, the anger of women, the racism, the plight of the disadvantaged and the downtrodden of society. You understand it because you've seen the injustice firsthand, and the response from radical Furies as well, even as they disdained you because you're a man. But your gender gives you an advantage in the system, and you learned how to fool the leaders in the smoky back rooms into thinking you were one of them. You present yourself as more moderate than you feel. You must, to get elected. The boys in the network trust you for now. When they learn otherwise, it'll be too late.

Some among the Furies hate you for your seeming betrayal, for not openly battling the establishment, for joining the enemy. A few in the know think what you're doing is a valiant, yet lost, cause. Still others would just as soon cut off certain parts of your anatomy and leave you to rot in some back alley, no questions asked. But you know all too well that being a hothead serves no purpose; too many dead Sisters have proven you right. One day, though, you'll be in Washington, slowly reeling in all the political fools who think they know what's going on. You'll get their support and make them love you. Then, you'll act as a force for change for your people.

Concept: You're a manipulator, a rising star in local politics with an eye on Capitol Hill. You're young enough to believe you can make a difference. You've got an edge — being Kinfolk — and certain connections that help you succeed where others are failing. The enemy is all around you, though, and you have to beware of what offers you accept. You never know when some harmless pledge of support will cost you your soul....

Roleplaying Hints: A real chameleon, you can appear to give support to civil rights and the poor but still make people in power *think* it's all a sham. They believe you're just as corrupt as they are. They're wrong.

Equipment: Cellular phone, laptop, lots of paperwork.



Kinfolk: Unsung Heroes

Show-and-Tell Wolf

Quote: Whuf!

Prelude: You were just weaned and learning to hunt when the hikers found your pack's den. Your mother ran off, hoping to tempt the humans into following. Instead, they stupidly reached into the den and pulled you out. What a cute little pup, they said. Just like a dog. They put you in their pack and headed down the mountain, sneaked past the ranger station and drove back to the city.

Well, not too many months passed before it became apparent you certainly *weren't* a dog. You had a real attitude problem when the humans tried to mess with your food dish. Showing your dominance over the children scared the adults for some reason. And they lost their patience for the last time when you rolled in your own feces, then leaped against the woman in her silk business suit. You were just trying to play and communicate how glad you were she was home, but they didn't see it that way. The man would've taken you for a walk in the woods with his .45, except for the intervention of a nature center employee. She was Kinfolk — like you — though you have yet to understand the true nature of your connection. Some people in the pack wanted to take you back to the wild, but your former tribe wanted no part of you; you weren't fully domesticated, but you weren't exactly feral anymore, either. So, you stay at the nature center and get taken around to schools and scout troops for show and tell. The food's good and there's a pack of two-legs and four-legs to romp with, so maybe things aren't as bad as they could've been....

Concept: You're a wolf removed from your natural habitat by some city slickers and handed over to human Kinfolk and their werewolf relatives, who now watch over you.

Roleplaying Hints: To you, most humans are just like pack members; treat them as such. Be sure to sniff the hindquarters of younger ones, and let them know you're more important than they are. Sometimes, you get confused. You're an animal, after all, but you still feel out of place among wolves in the wild. You missed out on a lot of training from your packmates in matters of hunting and generally being wolfish, and you pay for it when you deal with other wolves.

Equipment: Collar and nametag.



