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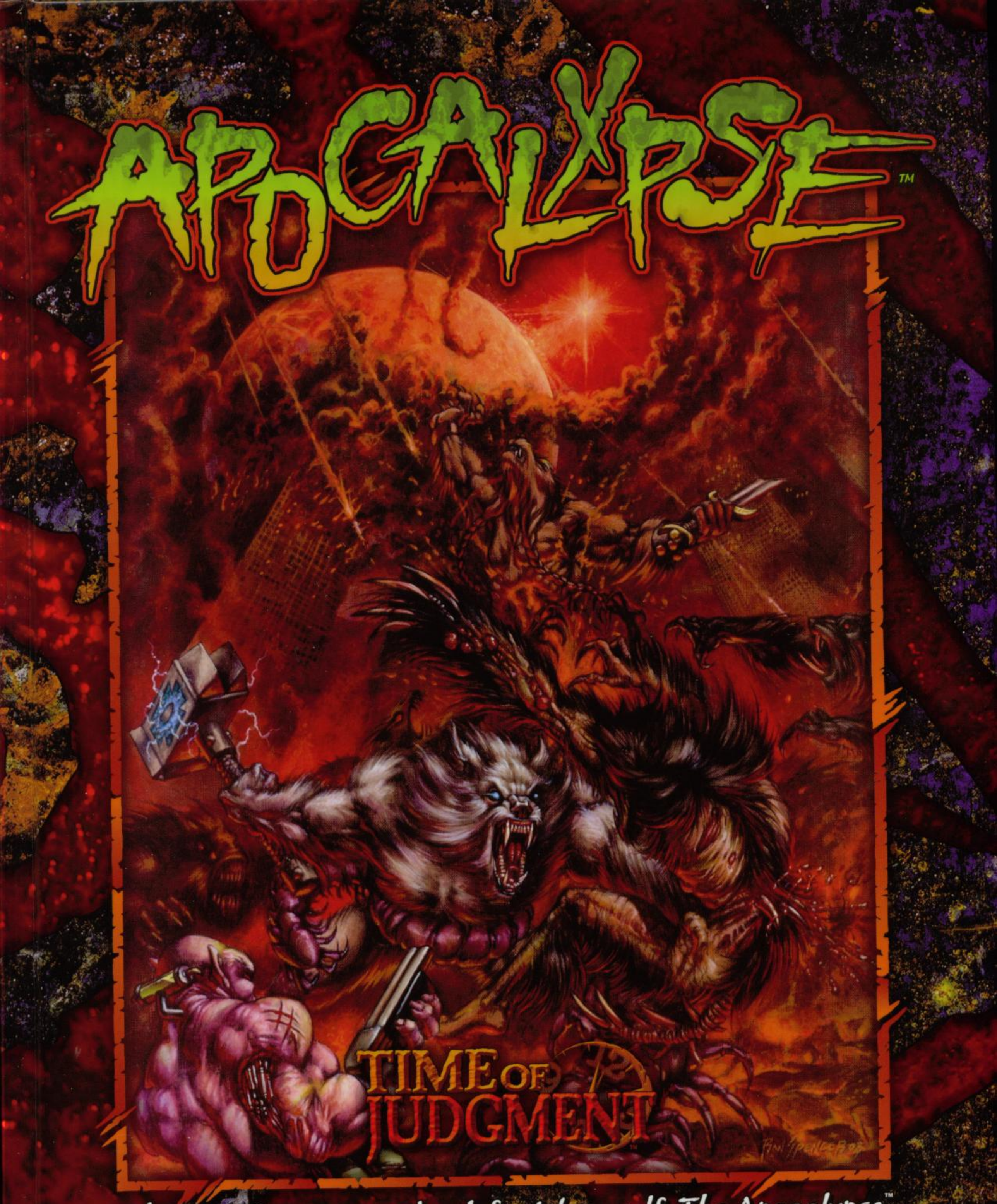

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LEGENDS OF THE GAROU

Above and Beyond

By Carl Bowen

A tearing wind of electrified glass and tortured wails buffeted Mephi Faster-than-Death as he fought for his life against an army of vengeful ghosts, a host of maddened desert spirits and swarms of Banes at the foot of the Tower of the Etesian Wind. The tower seemed to float just above the Umbral sands of Tanta, Egypt amid an impenetrable heat haze, brutally resistant to the raging storm. Livid crimson lightning tore the night sky all around it, and fell winds drove waves of deliriously frenzied Banes in every direction, yet the tower stood strong against the assault. Fighting both the sand for stable footing and the wind for breath and balance, Mephi grimly tried to emulate the tower's example.

He knew, though, that he was losing this battle against time. He was stranded here, abandoned by the detachment of Ahroun from the nearby Etesian Wind caern who had been commanded to see him safely to the tower. He'd heard them die as they fled, picked off and torn apart by the hungry things that lived in the storm winds. He'd known then that no one else would come until the storm died down — if it ever did — and his only chance of survival lay in making it to the tower and the long forgotten path that supposedly lay within. Yet he'd lost his d'siah blade trying to clear himself a path through his enemies with it, and the tower receded maliciously into the distance the harder he fought to reach it. At last he'd cried out in despair to Owl for help, but even his patron spirit had forsaken him.

He was going to die with no one to know the story of how it happened. But even so, he resolved not to let the Wyrm-spawn's victory come cheap. He howled with a fury to rival the storm's and held his cobra-headed fetish staff alternately like a spear and a baseball bat. He spun and dashed and leaped from killing blow to killing blow, forcing the Banes and the storm to wound him a piece at a time or not at all. He took every nick and slash they gave him as reassurance that he was still alive, and he let their playful good humor at his certain doom fuel his Rage.

But his honor and courage could forestall disaster only so long. As he swiped a clawed hand through one killer Bane's stomach, another darted behind him and lashed his back like a slaver's whip. Another followed it, driving him to one knee with a hamstring bite. The storm blinded and deafened him, and a third Bane tore

open his right arm from his shoulder to the golden band at his wrist. He clung to his staff then, trying vainly to ward off the final blow, as a great beast swooped from the sky and encircled him in its claws to finish him off.

It started in Casablanca at the Quiet House, down the street from the Wheel of Ptah Umbral crossroads. The place was a local Silent-Strider-only meeting spot Mephi visited regularly but infrequently. He always found it a calming, cosmopolitan place to relax among his own kind for a while before going back out to look for trouble. Provided trouble didn't find him there first.

That night, after sating himself on shish kebab and a semi-potable home-brewed beer, he'd allowed himself to be persuaded to recite the last cantos of the *Saga of the Silver Crown*. Many of the other werewolf tribes across the world — over whom most Silver Fangs extrapolated their alleged right to rule — found the *Saga* an annoying, self-congratulatory tool to bootstrap a justification for tyrannical Silver Fang excesses, but it struck a favorable chord with Silent Strider sensibilities. Keeping everyone in the Quiet House hanging on his every word, Mephi recounted twice-exiled King Albrecht's rise and return to glory.

He was just about to follow the *Saga* up with a story about the time he'd actually joined King Albrecht to face the forces of the fell spirit Jo'cllath'mattric in Serbia, but he didn't get the chance. At that moment, a young, energetic visitor entered through the Quiet House's magically warded and hidden doorway and arrowed straight for Mephi's table after a quick look around. This visitor shared a certain rangy worldliness with his fellow Silent Striders, but he dressed like a figure out of Ancient Egypt. He wore the fine robes and sedate headdress of a scholar from that period, with only a notched Owl's Talon d'siah hinting at any experience on the battlefield. His appearance was such that it was a testament to the unflappable reserve of the Strider tribe that no one so much as looked at him sideways for it.

Mephi didn't recognize this man who appeared to be seeking him out, but the visitor's reputation spoke for itself when he introduced himself as Damien Mourns-the-Dead. He was one of the tribe's foremost Theurge historians, and he had made notable progress in his search for ways to break the Silent Striders' tribal curse. Yet his purpose was neither social nor educational, as he made abundantly clear as soon as Mephi allowed him to sit.

"Don't bother to introduce yourself, Mephi Faster-than-Death," Damien said as Mephi started to speak. "I know who you are and what you're capable of. Your most recent exploits with Lord Albrecht of the Silver Fangs and your adventure alone into the Tisza River hellhole are already growing into legend all across this hemisphere."

"I lost my closest friend on that 'adventure,'" Mephi growled, gripping his cobra-headed walking staff — which that dear departed girl had given him — so tightly that the wood creaked. "So watch it. What do you want?"

"It isn't 'want' so much as 'need,'" Damien corrected. "For, you see, Bennu and the other blessed children have gone missing. You do know who I mean?"

Mephi nodded but remained silently stunned. Normally, Silent Striders valued every tribemate's life equally, but Bennu and those rare few like her were cherished above all others. For reasons unknown, these special, fey children did not suffer from the curse that afflicted the rest of their tribe. Upon being ousted from their Ancient Egyptian homeland more than 3,500 years ago by the evil god Set, the Silent Striders had been cut off from all contact with their departed ancestors — contact that werewolves of other tribes took for granted. Discovering this, the elders had surrounded these special chosen ones with elite cadres of warriors and hidden them away from the agents of the Wyrm. It was no enviable position for a young Silent Strider to be in — forced into hiding, never allowed to indulge in the wanderlust that bloomed in a Strider's heart — but with the fate of the tribe potentially resting on them, there was no alternative.

Except now the situation had changed drastically.

"We need your help," Damien continued. "You must come with me."

"I will," Mephi said. "But how is it possible they're missing?"

Damien said only that he would explain once they were on their way to their intermediate destination, and he would offer no more. So, feeling he had little choice, Mephi followed Damien out of the Quiet House to the Umbral crossroads at the heart of the Wheel of Ptah.

• • •

Their intermediate destination turned out to be the Caern of the Etesian Wind near the city of Tanta in northern Egypt, and as they tirelessly ran toward it along a well traveled moon path, Damien began to speak.

"It's our fault entirely," the historian began. "We've been telling the children for years that our hope in breaking Set's curse lay in them alone. We put all our stock in their destiny and, I fear, convinced them to

rely too much on their blessed connection with our ancestors. Now they've done what they must have thought we expected."

"Which is..."

"They've gone looking for our Umbral homerealm, Ta-tchesert," Damien sighed. "They hope there to find the key to breaking our curse. We made them believe they had no choice."

"But the ways are lost," Mephi said. "And even if—"

"Lost no longer, though finding them could well prove disastrous. My fellow Theurges and I who have been studying the children thought that by bringing them together here in our homeland, we could help them uncover the answers to deeper lost mysteries than any one might in isolation."

"And it worked?"

Damien nodded. "As the children welcomed one another, the ancestors spoke through them more frequently and clearly than ever before. At our urging, they revealed to us a path through the Umbra to Ta-tchesert that we had never even considered. Though it is long forgotten, they assured us that it lay waiting still for those who would take it."

"So you sent the blessed ones off to prove the ancestors right?" Mephi growled. "A bunch of *kids*."

"No!" Damien gasped, almost missing a step. "They're much too valuable as resources. My fellows and I are culpable only of shortsighted neglect in this, not of such flagrant contempt as that. No, the children slipped away from their guardians and set off on this quest of theirs on their own."

"They snuck out? You're sure they weren't kidnapped or something?"

"We are. When we discovered their absence, we found a note from Bennu explaining her intentions. In it, she wrote, 'We have unto ourselves a Quest, a Sacred Journey we must perform. Such is the will of Gaia.'"

"I recognize that," Mephi said in a low, stunned voice. "It's from the Prophecy of the Phoenix. So the children must have thought—"

"Yes. But only because we led them to believe it by constantly pressuring them to use their gift for us."

"And you haven't been able to find them since?"

"No. We haven't even been able to mount a search party yet. A storm broke upon the Umbra shortly after the children disappeared, and the caern where we had collected them has come under attack. Others have gone for reinforcements, but when the spirits told me that you were at the Wheel of Ptah, I knew I had to come and beg your help."

"You hardly had to beg," Mephi said, flattered despite himself that the spirits had pointed him out. "I'll do what I can to help, but I don't know what I can..."

"You must find them, Mephi. You must. No other Strider is as experienced and talented as you at Umbral exploration and survival. You must follow their path, find the children and see them safely to Ta-tchesert. If you cannot, you must guard them and return them safely home. They must not be killed. They must not be captured by the Wyrm's servants. They must—"

"Okay, I get it," Mephi said, damming the rush of hysteria he heard in the historian's words. "But how am I supposed to find them? I have no idea where they went or how they planned to find Ta-tchesert. I've never even been there myself."

"We know," Damien said, mastering his panic. "What knowledge the children recovered has been recorded at the Caern of the Etesian Winds. It's from there that the children stole away, and if the caern has not yet fallen — Gaia willing — it's from there that your own sacred journey will begin."

"Then let's hurry," Mephi said, doubling his pace. "I hear a storm in the distance."

• • •

The blessed children's path, when Mephi learned of it, was elegantly simple and strangely familiar. It began at the Tower of the Etesian Wind, tracked through a long-forgotten passage beneath it into the Cavern of Sokar, crept into a river at that cavern's mouth into the realm of Deep Water, and finally emptied into the Umbral Nile at the steep banks of the Strider homerealm. The spirit ways between these particular realms had long been lost to even the eldest living Strider Theurges (and never recovered by even those opportunistic Garou who had resettled the area in the centuries since Set's curse), but the ancestor spirits of the blessed ones remembered them. Those spirits knew not only the paths but the means of disarming the traps and unlocking the wards between them as well. All this knowledge had been recorded at the Etesian Wind caern as the children dredged it up, and it waited there still. Getting it and memorizing it was no challenge at all.

It was a little tougher actually getting permission to leave the caern once they arrived. Its Warder and de facto leader, Omar One-Leap was bloody, harried and near frenzy trying to coordinate a cohesive defense against the horde of Banes that rode the Umbral storm and materialized in devastating waves all around his Guardians time and again. The Master of the Rite and Gatekeeper struggled to erect wards to keep the Banes at bay, but the storm blowing in the Umbra kept

tearing them down after only a few minutes' respite. The reinforcements One-Leap had been expecting were slow in coming — apparently his was not the only caern under attack at the moment — and he laughed in Damien's face when the Theurge asked for a detachment of warriors to accompany Mephi on his quest to find the blessed children. Only after much badgering and an argument that nearly resorted to fang and claw when One-Leap called Damien a "mule-spawning jackal" did One-Leap consent to offer any aid at all.

He ordered one pack of Ahroun to see Mephi safely into the Tower of the Etesian Wind, but only on the conditions that Damien stay behind to fight in the caern's defense and Mephi return with reinforcements or not at all. It was not an ideal trade, but considering what was at stake, Mephi took what he could get. Wasting no time with good-byes or well-wishes, he gathered the Ahroun One-Leap had detached and led them off at a sprint into what he hoped would be a *lasting lull* in the ferocious storm. He had no delusions of glory or fame as he set out — he just hoped to Gaia that he'd survive long enough to do what his tribe was depending on him to do.

There was no pain as the great beast swooped down to the Penumbral desert floor and lifted Mephi away. He hardly even had time to register surprise before the ground disappeared and a force carried him high into the shrieking, blinding winds. Trying to regain his bearings and equilibrium in the storm would have been useless, even if he were in a position to do something about his situation once he did. There was no up or down in this chaos, and his death could still come from any quarter. As if to underscore this point, some flying nightmare with a three-jawed mouth and an irregular array of wildly rolling eyes appeared right in front of him, snapping at his face and chittering insanely. Held immobile by whatever had snatched him from the ground, Mephi could only snap his eyes shut and cling instinctively to the staff that he miraculously had not dropped.

An eternity went by before he realized that nothing had bitten his face off. Whatever had lunged at him was now far behind him without having taken so much as a taste of his blood. And as it receded into the distance, Mephi began to realize other things as well. For one, his wounds were healing — a lot faster and more completely than simple regeneration would have healed them, in fact. Strength and energy returned to his abused limbs, and his skin sealed itself and was made whole.

The next thing he noticed was that he couldn't feel the ravages of the Umbral storm anymore. He could still hear it raging very close by, but no wind or debris could touch him. Forcing his eyes open at last, he saw that the reason for this was that two long, broad wings encircled him in a dark, safe cocoon. Oddly, he could still hear and feel a pair of large, powerful wings battling the storm and doggedly propelling the creature that held him higher into the Umbral sky. *To its nest*, Mephi thought. *To its* young, *probably*.

"Not exactly, Mephi Faster-than-Death," an ancient, amused voice responded. "Don't be afraid. You're out of danger for the moment."

Mephi wanted so very desperately to believe that. "Owl?"

"No," the voice said. As it spoke, the sounds of the storm began to die away. "But he apologizes for appearing to forsake you. He holds you in the high regard. Falcon speaks well of you too, through Horus, his lieutenant."

The words soothed and relaxed Mephi's tense muscles, but they worried him at the same time. "I thank you, spirit, for my rescue — and I mean no offense — but I don't recognize you. If you're not Owl, who are you?"

"His cousin, in a sense," was all the voice would reply, and a period of silence followed. In it, Mephi heard the storm fall away completely, and he had to wonder where he was being taken. Another moment later, the voice spoke to him again, saying, "Now here's a sight."

The two wings that surrounded him faded into ephemera and Mephi found himself looking out at an endless expanse of stars in a clear night sky. The vista dropped below the threshold of his vision, and when he looked down at himself, he saw nothing but more sidereal emptiness beneath his feet and all around — all of it tainted by a wan, reddish sheen from somewhere behind him.

"Where are we?" he gasped.

"High in the Aetherial Realm beyond the Earth," his rescuer said. "The storm won't—"

"Why?"

"Perspective. You need to be able to see everything that's happening where you came from. You must remember it well and tell the others when you return."

"From where?" Mephi said, looking around in mounting fear. "Where are you taking me? What's happening back home?"

"Soon," his rescuer said, but Mephi was already struggling against its claws to look back the way they had come. A note of panic filled his rescuer's voice. "No, it's too early! You must not look back! Not until—"

But it was already too late. Craning his neck to its limits, he looked back toward home and beheld a

horror to stop a fainter heart. First he was blinded by Anthelios, the Red Star that stained the Umbra eerie crimson and leered malignantly at Gaia. Then his vision cleared, and he could see beyond the Red Star to Earth itself. What he saw tore a shriek of terror from deep within him, then his mortal mind could take no more. He shuddered once, uncontrollably, then lay limp in his rescuer's claws.

• • •

Mephi awoke some time later in a barren, rocky place of red dirt under a strange night sky. The land was folded and cracked, pitted with deep craters and scarred with even larger canals. An enormous mountain warped the horizon, and angry red dust storms played around its feet. Mephi couldn't see the Red Star here, but the presence of a second moon in this sky was a more disturbing sign of how far he'd come. He levered himself shakily to his feet with his staff and said to the cobra head atop it, "This is just great. Where the hell am I?"

"A safe place," a deep and lonely voice answered. "For a time."

Mephi spun around and found a gray-furred Crinos werewolf standing a few paces away from him. He carried a tall staff not unlike Mephi's, and he wore Ancient Egyptian-style clothing and an excess of gold jewelry. He seemed every bit the wandering and weary traveler as Mephi did, but something in his blue-green eyes set him apart from any other werewolf Mephi had ever met. They were not like mortal eyes — more like those of an ancient spirit. His voice was not that of his rescuer, however.

"Do you recognize it?" the spirit continued, spreading his arms to indicate their surroundings.

"It looks like Nerigal's realm," Mephi answered cautiously. "Canopus Skydancer of the Sept of the Stars described it to me once. But you're not Nerigal."

Smiling, the spirit shook his head. "Just a brother passing through. I wander this way every now and then."

"A brother," Mephi repeated. "Then you're Meros, the Incarna of Pluto, right? Canopus described you too." The spirit smiled. "What are you doing here?"

"Better me than Anubis, wouldn't you say, Strider?" the spirit said with a grin. Mephi did not return the expression.

"Fine, so what am *I* doing here?"

"You were brought here to be shown something. I thought Phoenix would have told you already."

"Phoenix…" Mephi's knees weakened, and he had to lean on his staff. "It… yes."

"Looks like you weren't of a mind to wait. I found Phoenix here trying to wake you. She seemed pretty upset. I told her I'd look after you until you came to."

"Thanks, I guess."

"Sure. How much do you remember?"

In one eye Mephi saw the Earth; in the other he saw its Umbral reflection. In both he saw Gaia's death spasms as Anthelios bathed her in his crimson bile. He saw wars raging in every land that humanity had ever considered holy. He saw pollution and poison and ever-evolving contagion commingling and giving birth to invisible children that decimated every other living thing. He saw the Weaver's great webs catching fire and snapping under high tension, slicing the works of man to pieces. He saw animals throwing themselves into the sea in paroxysms of terror. He saw the many hidden Hives of the Wyrm-seduced metastasizing and ultimately disgorging the vanguard of the armies of the Maeljin Incarnae. He saw the moon pass in front of the sun, and everywhere its shadow touched the earth or the sea, living creatures died by the millions. And when Anthelios looked upon that shadow, ancient, deeply buried things crawled out into its light.

Death was no more, as everything that had ever passed away rose again to unleash the storms of Duat on the living world. Safety was no more, as scions of an unliving god arose to devour their own murderous children. Hope was no more, as even the living dreams of youth turned to nightmares and spread terror and insanity like a plague. There was nowhere to run, as even the planet itself turned on its inhabitants. Its skin quaked and tsunamis hundreds of stories tall raced across the oceans. Its skin burst, and vaults of lava that had lain buried and compressed for hundreds of thousands of years exploded, spraying fire and stone and ash miles into the sky. And deep under the ocean, an ancient and insane being opened a sense organ that was both eye and devouring maw. Whatever it beheld, it consumed, and nowhere on the whole of the Earth did anyone have the power to stop it.

Mephi turned away and voided his stomach noisily onto the red soil, trying hard not to pass out again. The vision had less power over him for being only a memory, but he still might have fallen over again if not for his staff.

"Enough," he whispered through a raw throat. "Enough to forget what I ever thought fear was."

"Can't say Phoenix didn't warn you," Meros answered. "But that's a good thing. Remember that fear. See every detail in your mind's eye, for you must remember them all. You must relay them exactly to your people, for they have a choice to make."

"What choice?" Mephi asked, finally looking up to meet the spirit's eyes.

"Where to go now," Meros said. "The only choice you have left."

"What?" Mephi barely breathed the word.

"There are other homes than Gaia," the spirit replied. "Other places that would take you in if you proved worthy. This place is one of them. I have visited countless others. I know of even more that no one on Earth can yet conceive. All the hidden paths into infinity now lie exposed, and I can lead you down any one you choose. You can lead your people, and your people can lead the others. Your Kinfolk, your fellow tribes, the Fera... Anyone who would but follow you."

Mephi's head was spinning with the possibility this spirit proposed. He could lead a last Diaspora as his whole world burned. Except...

"No, I've already seen what's happening back there. It's too late."

"Happening?" the spirit snorted. "You were very close to this place when you saw what you saw, Strider. Farther from the Earth than you think. As fast as you'll have to return across all that distance, none of that will be as far along as it was when you saw it once you arrive."

"What?"

"So young," the spirit sighed. "Look, you've had a vision — think of it that way. And now that you know what's *going to* happen, you have to get back and tell your people. Then you have to decide, and quickly, where you want to go."

"But what if we don't want to go?"

The spirit looked shocked. "Don't... But don't you remember what you just saw?"

"I do," Mephi moaned. "All too well. But what I didn't see was any of my people — any Garou at all — fighting to save Gaia. I don't believe any of my people, much less *all* of them, would just give up the fight and let the world die screaming like that."

"You don't believe your vision was genuine?"

"I believe it was. I believe I saw how things *could* be, but not how they *should*. What I saw

is what'll happen if we make your choice and abandon our home instead of fighting for it."

"Are you insane?" the spirit spat. "You'll all die."

"*You're* the one who's insane if you think we wouldn't rather die than run and hide like cowards. And also, fuck you — we're not dead yet. As long as the Garou Nation stands, our world will never fall. Even if we do…"

"Fine," the spirit said, shaking its head. "Deny the infinite and return to your doomed world. But don't be surprised when the news you bring turns your people's fighting spirits to water and undermines their re—"

"Enough," Mephi barked, his Rage stirring in him at long last, despite the unmanning terror of all he'd seen in such a short time. "Just tell me how to get back, then get out of my way. I've got a mission to finish and another one to start."

"Here," the spirit sneered, producing a long, scorched feather from the back of his belt and thrusting it into Mephi's hand. "Phoenix left this for you. Carry it into one of those storms in the distance and let the wind lift you off the ground. Then tell the feather where you want to go. If you hold onto it tight, you'll be there before you count sixteen. Then you're on your own."

"No, I won't be," Mephi said. And with that, he sprinted off at the speed of thought to find another storm.

• • •

"Good boy," a very old man said quietly as the young Strider disappeared into the distance, leaving him all alone. "Took you long enough to heat up, though."

He chuckled to himself at that, then started wriggling out of the uncomfortable spirit-skin he'd been wearing. The motion pulled at two half-healed punctures in his side, and he put a hand to the wound tenderly. It still hurt, and there was still venom in his system. It hurt like a son of a bitch, actually, and he was no cub anymore who could just shrug that sort of thing off.

"Probably doesn't matter anyway," he mused, still laughing to himself. "Not much time left now to worry 'bout it."

A dizzy spell washed over him, and he sat down hard in the red dust. *Nope*, he thought. *Not much time at all.*

"Oh well… Least it ain't rainin'."

• • •

Sometime later — or possibly earlier, it was confusing — Mephi Faster-than-Death returned to a part of the Umbra much closer to Earth and more familiar than the realm whence he'd just come. He returned unceremoniously, streaking down through the night sky and punching a hole through gathering storm clouds, blazing like a comet or a falling star. The Phoenix feather fetish protected him and guided him, and he dropped with an enormous splash into a cold, dark Umbral aspect of the mighty Nile.

The impact knocked the wind out of him and tumbled him like a wind-blown leaf, and he spiraled toward the bottom swallowing water. A deep current yanked the feather out of his hand, but he managed to keep his walking staff in hand. A silent eternity later, he hit sand and was able to orient himself. He could feel a path leading away along the river bottom to realms he had never seen, but if the Phoenix feather had worked like Meros said, he needed to get up to the bank. So, planting first his staff then his feet in the silt, he leapt straight up, hoping he broke the surface before he drowned.

The currents tossed him downstream and kicked him around in the process, but they did not slow his ascent overmuch. He broke into open air and fetched up against the steep bank in a thicket of bulrushes. His body melted down into his Homid form and expelled all the water he'd swallowed in one great gout. When he could breathe again, he wearily set to climbing the bank, hoping he hadn't washed too far downstream. He made poor progress against the muddy slope until something at the top reached down, grabbed his staff and hauled him up — mostly as a product of him hanging on to keep from losing the fetish.

When Mephi had regained solid ground, he found himself surrounded by a sorry lot of bedraggled Crinos werewolves, glaring and pointing weapons at him. The girl in the center of them — who still held the other end of his staff — stepped forward and pressed the edge of an ancient khopesh against his throat.

"Who are you?" she growled, her voice sounding more wary and afraid than intent on immediate violence. "What are you doing here?"

"My name is Mephi Faster-than-Death," Mephi said, trying to sound relaxed and supremely confident despite the circumstances. "And I'm here looking for you."

APOCALYPSE™

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Special Thanks

As special as they get. Thanks to all of you, the 12-year veterans and the new faces alike, who've stuck it through with us up until this point. We raise our glasses to you and hope you enjoy this final stretch of a long, wild ride.

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PRINTED IN CANADA.

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Introduction: Opening Salvo

...the wolf will swallow the sun and that will seem a great disaster to men. Then another wolf will seize the moon and that one too will do great harm. The stars will disappear from heaven. Then this will come to pass, the whole surface of the earth and the mountains will tremble so [violently] that trees will be uprooted from the ground, mountains will crash down, and all fetters and bonds will be snapped and severed. The wolf Fenrir will get loose then. The sea will lash against the land because the Midgard Serpent is writhing in giant fury trying to come ashore...."

— Snorri Sturluson, "The Prose Edda" (Jean I. Young, tr.)

The End Is Here

Every Garou who will fight in the Last Battle has already been born. The Eye of the Wyrm has opened. The Seventh Sign of the Prophecy of the Phoenix is about to be seen. The champions have been chosen, and the battle lines have been drawn.

The Apocalypse has arrived.

Welcome, then, to the final supplement for **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**. This chronicle sourcebook contains setting information on the state of the world during the final days, four different potential scenarios in which the End may play out, and plenty of advice and tools for the Storyteller to use to craft the final story of a chronicle. Here you'll finally get to see how everything plays out — who will be making it to the Final Battle, who will fall tragically before reaching the field of honor, even who lives and who dies. Nothing is sacred, nothing is safe; even Gaia and the Triat themselves may be scarred, remade or even destroyed when all is said and done.

And who decides how it all plays out? Who's the final arbiter of whether it's all been for nothing, or if the Garou's brave sacrifices ultimately redeem their tribes, their race, even the entire world?

Why, you do.

Why?

The big question. Why are we ending **Werewolf** — well, and the rest of the World of Darkness? And why are we ending it in such a way that the **Werewolf** world will be something entirely different by the time all is said and done?

Essentially, the time has come. There's only so long that the threat of "impending Apocalypse" can, well, impend before it starts to look like a joke. Now, of course, **Werewolf** doesn't look like a joke yet — we haven't been so hard up for supplement ideas that we've started publishing **Camp Book: Songkeepers** or **Book of Nature & Demeanor** yet. But we don't want to get to that state. The best way for **Werewolf** to end is to end in its prime — with most of the books that any fan could think of in print, and the ones that have yet to be published being fairly niche products. **Werewolf** Revised is essentially complete — the last year has seen just about all the bases covered, from two Players Guides to the final Tribebooks. This is a good time to wind things up, and lay the game line to rest.

That brings us to this book. It's easy enough to see Apocalypse as a "metaplot book," one that demands that you personally end your chronicle with the Apocalypse the very same month that this book sees publication. But that's not at all the intention. This book is meant to be a toolkit for helping you figure out how to end your chronicle with an Apocalypse story, whether you do so within a week of reading this Introduction or in ten years' time. Any dates listed in this book are merely suggestions, or indications of how things would have played out in an official timeline — they are by no means irrevocable or even at all important. In fact, this book is designed so that you can run multiple Werewolf chronicles and end them all with a different Final Battle each time.

In all honesty, there have been requests for sourcebooks on the Apocalypse, Gehenna and the like for years. Not as "metaplot books" — but as sourcebooks, designed to help players and Storytellers design their own End Times chronicles. And each time these were suggested by fans, our reply has usually been "We would rather not do those books unless we were actually ending the World of Darkness; it would seem anticlimactic to publish books after we described The End." And we're holding to that — the last book published for **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** *should* deal with the Apocalypse, and it should be a sourcebook first and foremost. Anything else would be anticlimactic.

Continuing On

Yes, **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** ceases publication with this book. Of course, that doesn't mean you can't keep playing with the books you have. For one, you certainly don't have to use the Apocalypse scenario right away; in fact, most scenarios could only be helped by spending some time in which the Storyteller carefully sets up the events leading to the Apocalypse. With extra time for foreshadowing and other build-up, the End Times scenario will be all the more satisfying when it hits.

The default presumption is that an Apocalypse scenario is the last you'll run for a given chronicle. Most to all of the characters may very well die — in some cases, it may be required of them. The world is changed forever, and even if it manages to survive (thanks to a well-earned victory on your players' part), what comes after is not really recognizable as the same world of **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**. The scenarios are engineered this way in order to ensure that the Apocalypse is the literal climax of a chronicle, rather than "just another adventure story." The Apocalypse really should be the point where the story ends.

Of course, that doesn't mean a new story can't pick up afterwards. Several of the scenarios suggest interesting post-apocalyptic settings that would make exciting settings for a new chronicle. It will be all but impossible to start a new chronicle exactly where the old one left off — same characters, same concerns, and so on — but ultimately, that provides a new form of freedom.

And there's absolutely no reason you can't start over again after the Apocalypse — beginning a new **Werewolf** campaign in the modern era, in a historical era, or whenever. There are enough scenarios listed that even a group who's already played through the Apocalypse doesn't know how the next **Werewolf** chronicle is going to end.

Mysteries Revealed

Plenty of loose ends are addressed within the pages of **Apocalypse** — the nature of Anthelios, the destiny of the Perfect Metis, the shape and form of the Final Battle, and so on. However, this book doesn't purport to wrap everything up with One Definitive Answer. This comes from a mixture of practicality and good sportsmanship. If the players' characters have fought hard and bled to defend the Perfect Metis from those who would have killed him (or her), then the Storyteller should have the option to choose a destiny for said metis that doesn't imply that the players have made a horrible mistake. That doesn't mean that the characters should always be in the right — but the Storyteller should be free to choose whether to punish or reward them. Those freedoms are abridged rather more abruptly when there's only One True Way to run an Apocalypse chronicle.

Although the "official metaplot" has always been a theme running through the game, a sort of uber-story that links events from one supplement to the next, ultimately **Werewolf** is not a fiction series. It's a roleplaying game, meant to be interactive. This is where we finish our part of the tale — and you pick up the thread of the narrative.

For the "official" view on how all things play out, check out the sister fiction novel to this book, *The Last Battle* by Bill Bridges (no, not the C.S. Lewis one). The chain of events described there places the central published characters at the heart of the story, and follows them to the end. For your own games, though, we highly recommend that your own Garou be the stars of the show.

How to Use This Book

No, we don't mean to imply that you have no idea how to use this book; after all, if you paid money for it, we figure you have some idea of what you wanted it for. Maybe you skipped this section with every other **Werewolf** book, and of course you're well within your rights to do so. Still, you might want to read this. As before, statements of intent are pretty important when trying to figure out why to blow up the world.

The most important thing about **Apocalypse** is that it's about choices. There are four End Times scenarios included in this book, and we don't expect you to run all of them. In fact, it's patently impossible to explore every possibility presented in this book in one game; how can you have all thirteen tribes fall at once, for instance, and still have something remotely resembling a story? This book is not meant to be a work of fiction in which you read about somebody else's characters saving or dooming the world. This book is essentially the equivalent of a set of building blocks — you can use the blocks to make the picture on the box (and instructions are included), but a little bit of imagination can turn those blocks into something else entirely.

Chapter One: The End Times is the default setting chapter for **Apocalypse**. This chapter describes the world of **Werewolf** as it is just as everything is coming to a boil. The setting details, for the most part, presume that one of the truly outrageous Apocalypse scenarios such as Ragnarok is about to break out, a Final Battle that will destroy the Veil forever. If the Apocalypse is destined to take a more subtle form, then not all of the events of this chapter may be appropriate. In fact, many of these events are placed to be used as "Apocalypse preludes," things that the characters can fight against or overcome before beginning one of the Apocalypse scenarios proper. Still, for the most part, consider this the "official" answer on what the world of **Werewolf** is like just before the end — the last bit of printed canon before it all goes away.

Chapter Two: The Last Battleground is the first of the Apocalypse scenarios; in some ways, it's also one of the mildest (relatively speaking, of course). This chapter details a scenario in which the Apocalypse is fought largely in the Umbra, where the Final Battle in the spirit world spills over to the material world but does not ravage it as thoroughly. This is the scenario for the moderate-minded Storyteller; although still an Apocalypse of grave consequence for the world and all on it, it's not nearly the bleakest of the scenarios presented here.

Chapter Three: A Tribe Falls takes an unconventional look at the Apocalypse — the Garou Nation is not destroyed from without, but from within. In this scenario, one of the Gaian tribes is corrupted to its core, tribal totem and all, and turns on its fellows. Rather than pick one ourselves, though, the choice is left to the Storyteller; there's ample advice for orchestrating the fall of any tribe, as well as for how to use them as the army of traitors in the Final Battle. Appropriately enough, most of the tribal fall scenarios begin with the best of intentions — the usual paving stones on the road to Malfeas.

Chapter Four: Weaver Ascendant places the Weaver, not the Wyrm, squarely in the role of the antagonist. By bringing new resources (such as Pentex and its subsidiaries) fully under Weaver control, the forces of the mad spinner are able to launch assaults against the Garou and their allies that do more damage in a few months than the Wyrm has managed in years. The stakes are nothing less than the connection of the physical and spirit worlds, and both worlds may wither and perish without one another. To stop the Weaver, the Garou may have to do the unthinkable — and will even that be enough? This scenario also places more emphasis on interaction with the other Changing Breeds, which may make it more suitable for chronicles that incorporate the Fera.

Chapter Five: Ragnarok is the final Apocalypse scenario, and the most excessive by far. Rorg hurls his destroying claw, Luna is mortally wounded, and the world is plunged into Fimbulwinter. Most higher plant and animal life dies, to say nothing of the effects on human civilization. Finally, the hordes of the Wyrm break loose in such numbers that it would take a miracle of valor and luck for the Garou to stem the tide. The severity of this scenario is not to be underestimated — but for those who want to end the world not with a whimper, but a bang, this is the loudest bang of all.

Chapter Six: The Last Tales is the Storyteller's guide to Apocalypse — a chapter of advice on how to smoothly fill in all the blanks and link your present chronicle to the Apocalypse scenario of your choice (or of your own devising).

The **Appendix: Rules and Dramatis Personae** contains a series of Gifts, rites, fetishes and characters, among other things, that are meant to supplement an Apocalypse chronicle. Many are devoted to one of the four scenarios in particular, though of course they can be used in almost any Apocalypse story.

The Scenarios

Each of the Apocalypse scenarios is presented as a general timetable of events, from the opening moves that begin the Apocalypse proper to the final confrontation where everything is settled. The Storyteller is the one to decide where the players fit into the whole mess, although of course plenty of suggestions are provided.

The scenarios by necessity require some customization; the events are generally meant to be tailored in ways that make them more relevant for the rest of the chronicle. In particular, it will probably be necessary to place antagonists of an appropriate scale; if the players' pack is on average Rank 5, they can't go up against the same things a Rank 2 pack would find challenging.

You may already have planned how you'd like your Apocalypse to play out, and largely you're just looking for extra details to throw in — an allusion to the fate of the Perfect Metis, a report of the final battle between Albrecht and Zhyzhak, some tidbits about what will happen with the Corax, whatever. That's great — you know plenty about your chronicle, including where it's going, so your players are in good hands. Pilfer as much as you like from the various scenarios and integrate them as you see fit — we hope you find some things you can't resist using.

Likewise, the scenarios don't have to be played out as totally separate entities. For instance, it's entirely possible to play out a *Ragnarok* scenario in which the three Triatic sacrifices from *The Last Battleground* are an integral part of getting things started. The increased Fera involvement in *Weaver Ascendant* can be parlayed into any other scenario. A few adjustments are inevitably going to be required, but this approach allows you to create a recipe for disaster with all your favorite ingredients. (Plus, it should do a fine job of throwing off any players who sneakily read the scenarios in an attempt to arm themselves with out-of-character knowledge. When all the signs for a tribe falling are in place and suddenly you parlay that into

the opening moves of *Weaver Ascendant*, the little cheats are in for a nasty shock when they realize they don't know how it's going to end.)

In particular, note that each of the scenarios is designed to be open-ended: specifically, to account for the actions of the players' characters in the final battles. There is of course absolutely nothing intrinsically wrong with "witness" chronicles, wherein the protagonists are largely helpless to do little other than survive in the face of total disaster. But they aren't for everyone. Odds are, your players are the sort who enjoy heroism in the face of horror, who like fighting against desperate odds, and who wouldn't mind the chance to "win" the Apocalypse. Although this book presumes the Apocalypse isn't something that can be stopped entirely — the world *will* change, largely for the worse — it also presumes that the players' pack can do something to help soften the blow.

The Final Battle will be a Pyrrhic victory at best. But a Pyrrhic victory is still a victory.

Gehenna, Ascension and Beyond

It's been said before that if you put a vampire, a werewolf and a mage in the same room, the characters will probably fight, but the themes will definitely be at it tooth and nail. This essential conflict of theme (and for that matter, style) is writ larger than ever before with the end of the world. When you're trying to decide what the *biggest* thing about the end of the World of Darkness is — Antediluvians, Ascension or the Final Battle with the armies of the Wyrm — it becomes evident that the game lines are jostling for attention. So how are these books used together?

First of all, the events of **Apocalypse** are designed with **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** in mind first, foremost and practically exclusively. This doesn't mean that they're deliberately designed to be as incompatible as possible with the events of **Gehenna**, **Ascension** or **Time of Judgment**; it isn't spite that motivates us. But this is meant to be the swan song for **Werewolf**, and that means keeping as true to **Werewolf** as possible. The final battle against the forces of the Wyrm isn't supposed to be overshadowed by the arrival of vampire demigods that aren't part of **Werewolf** mythology — so, the rise of the Antediluvians isn't a story element here.

There's another, even more practical reason that crossover elements don't play a large role in Apocalypse; not everyone buying this book follows all the other game lines. If the *Weaver Ascendant* scenario were to draw much of its story line from events in the overall story of **Mage**, **Werewolf** fans that didn't follow **Mage** would be left with an all but unusable scenario. That's hardly fair.

It's these two factors that make a crossover Apocalypse something best left to the individual Storyteller — you know how familiar your players are with the other game lines, and how much of the other game lines' endings they'll want to see.

That said, we don't discourage a crossover Apocalypse. If your game has incorporated elements of **Vampire** from the beginning, borrowing a few pages from Gehenna is probably more appropriate than ignoring the vampires entirely. Of the scenarios listed in this book, *The Last Battleground* and *A Tribe Falls* are probably the most compatible with the events of **Gehenna** and **Ascension**. Both play out the Garou's final struggle in a way that doesn't impact either the final nights of the vampires or the culmination of the mages' struggle. *Ragnarok* can combine with a truly apocalyptic Gehenna — after all, the Antediluvians rising from torpor when the moon's been shattered and the sun is gone is terrifyingly appropriate. *Weaver Ascendant* might work with an Ascension storyline, if the group is willing to accept a certain amount of blurring on what the Weaver truly is and represents.

Ultimately, if you've been running crossover for some time without problems, you probably don't need our advice. Do what's been working for you even as you blow up the world.

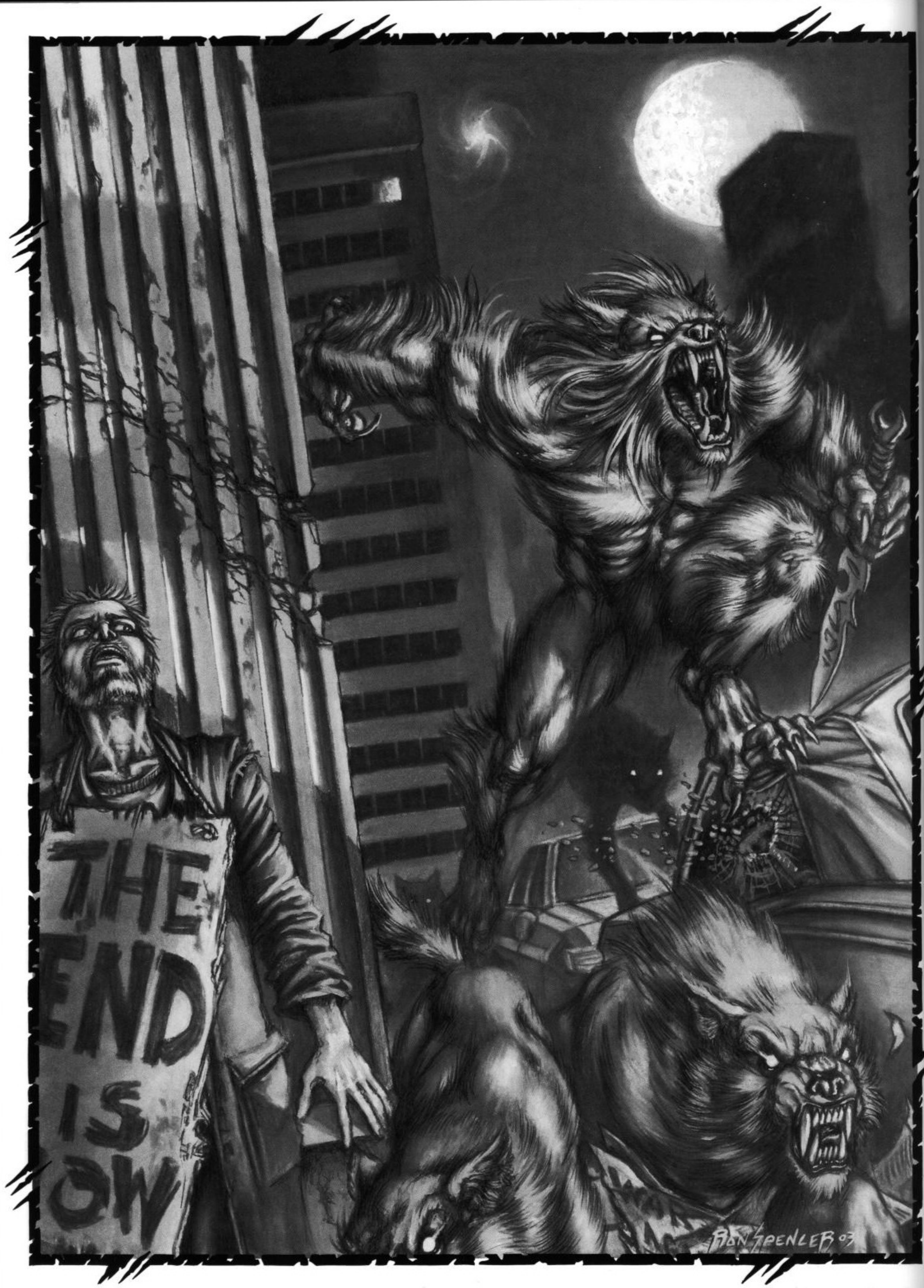
Final Words

Don't think that it's been entirely easy putting this book together. It hasn't. I haven't been developing **Werewolf** for as long as some of you have been playing it, but I've been doing it long enough that it became one of my favorite games of all. There are a thousand things I love about this game, some of which I can be personally proud of, many more of which I owe to the skilled authors and dedicated fans that made the game great. For all that I firmly believe that ending **Werewolf** with an apocalyptic bang instead of a noiseless whimper, it's tricky to say goodbye.

But all things end sooner or later; a story's ending gives the rest of it purpose. Of course, so too does the ride there, seeing things as they develop, and enjoying the twists and turns in the plot as it unfolds. It's the combination of the two that makes a story not just good, but great.

Thanks for being there. I hope you enjoy this book, I hope you enjoy **Werewolf** for many years to come, and I hope you come back to see what we're going to be up to next.

All the best.
Ethan Skemp
White Wolf Game Studio
August, 2003


THE
END
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RON SPENCER 03

Chapter One: The End Times

"Now I am become Shiva, Destroyer of Worlds."
— *Bhagavad-Gita*, quoted by Robert Oppenheimer after witnessing the first man-made nuclear explosion

I suspected for a long time, but I knew it was all over when the dragon came to call. She was maybe seventeen, and terrified. "Greetings, Micah Farwatcher. I have come to ask what you want remembered after the world ends." I invited her in for coffee. Her name was Sarah and she clutched my "World's Best Uncle" mug to keep her fingers from shaking. "I don't really understand it all. Not really," she said. "I remember it. I feel it. In a way, I know this better than I know... anything. But I don't understand."

"Start at the beginning," I said. I played the calm teacher, which helped us both. She couldn't be too far out of high school, and I was doing unpleasant math in my head. Signs and portents ticking down to zero.

"It's coming," she said. "The Wonderwork... The Apocalypse... The End that is nigh... I'm supposed to ask what you want us to remember. For after. How there's supposed to be an after — I don't know. But I have to ask."

"And you'll remember?" I asked. "I've never really understood how—"

"I don't have time. Do you know how many answers I have to get? How many people and... things I have to talk to? Get answers from. Tell them that the world's going to end? Not everyone takes it so well." She pulled herself together and put down her cup. "Crappy coffee. Thanks, though."

"You're welcome. How much time do I have to think about this?"

She looked at her watch. "Not long. Can I use your bathroom?"

I pointed the way and sat down in my thinking chair. It's old and ratty and the most comfortable thing I've ever sat in. I found it in the basement of the dorms at Stanford and I've kept it ever since. She came back quickly, and I could see the sad old soul hiding behind those young eyes. I wanted to give her a hug, but I didn't want to spook her and I definitely didn't want a pissed-off Mokolé in my house.

So I told her what I wanted the next world to know. She nodded, said thanks, and left. I sat down at my computer. I typed a quick command and it started sending a special email to everyone on my list. Spirits bound into the motherboard carried the message to others who don't use email.

I didn't bother locking the door when I left. I wasn't coming home again.

Ill Omens

In the End Times, Garou (and everyone else, for that matter) turn to prophecy as a roadmap through the uncertain times ahead. While the future is not set, many seers have had glimpses of probable paths that destiny may take. As the Apocalypse approaches, everyone is seeking to decipher that tiny fragment of knowledge that will let them survive the troubles to come, if only for a moment longer. What follows are some sources of prophesy that may prove useful in the last days of Gaia. Players and Storytellers will finally get to see these mysteries revealed. These are possible interpretations of the major Garou prophecies. Individual Storytellers should feel free to tweak or completely change the events described herein to fit their individual chronicles.

The Prophecy of the Phoenix

The most famous piece of Garou prophecy is the famous Prophecy of the Phoenix. Most Garou can recite it by heart, and debate its meaning. It is commonly accepted that at least five of the signs have already transpired — played out by wolf hunts and human overpopulation, by Chernobyl and the Exxon Valdez and the fires of burning oil wells. In the final months leading up to the Apocalypse, all of the signs come true again. Previous signs echo themselves, at a horrifying scale.

The First Sign: The Decimation of Kin

For hundreds, if not thousands of years, man hunted wolves. Not for food or for protection, but because man fears wolf. The Impergium remains in the human racial memory, its flames fanned by the Wyrm. Though some humans and many Garou had made strides in recent years to repopulate wolves in the wild, in the end, their efforts were too little too late. Human ranchers and hunters did much of the work in culling the wolves, and servants of the Corrupter Wyrm actively sought to finish the job.

Now, the enemy has targeted Kinfolk even more aggressively; the first Sign echoes with new and bloody strength. Human Kin find themselves under siege by Black Spiral Dancers who've gained access to the information collated by Magadon's database "MagNet" (see **Subsidiaries: A Guide to Pentex** for more). As the fallen tribe disseminates the information about their Gaian cousins' Kin, the list of missing and dead begins to rise. And while they handle the human relatives of the Garou, agents of the Wyrm simply let humans do their dirty work with regards to wolves. A news story about a new and deadly form of rabies was all the work they needed to do. Already panicked by the more visible signs of the End, humans are currently ignoring conservation laws and slaughtering any wolf they can catch. While the werewolves do what they can to protect their Kin, resources and space grow scarcer by the day.

The Second Sign: The Tide

Weaver's favorite child, Man, has spread to every corner of the globe, "taming" the land and taking its natural resources. In the past fifty years, the world has added an extra billion mouths to feed every thirteen years. Prior to that, it took close to thirty years to add a billion, and then a hundred years back for another billion humans. In the end times, with Wyrm thrashing to escape, Weaver spins her webs at a madcap rate, trying desperately to stop the destruction of her very self. This spiritual battle echoes into the mundane world. Humanity feels the web's hums and obeys. The human birth rate continues to climb, even in the midst of the chaos of the end times — while no new Garou are born at all. (See "Children of the Apocalypse," below.)

The echo of the Second Sign is a decrease in food production. Diseases like "Mad Cow" (bovine spongiform encephalitis) resurge across Europe and North America, while agriculture production plummets due to unseasonable weather withering (and freezing and drowning) crops in the fields.

The Third Sign: War and Pollution

As Wyrm and Weaver do battle, humanity plays out the conflict in the physical world. Tensions erupt around the globe. Border skirmishes and even full-scale invasions begin in the Middle East and in Africa. India and Pakistan go to war, and the threat of a nuclear exchange escalates. The Plume, once seen in Chernobyl, now erupts from the pits where the Zmei were once kept, and the lake of black death that coated the sea has returned in the Persian Gulf.

> **On Politics**
>
> The authors do not mean to trivialize the deaths of men, women and children on all sides of the conflict in the Middle-East by incorporating them into a role-playing adventure. The conflict in the Middle East has been ongoing since Biblical times. The authors hope that peace will someday reign in that troubled land.

The Fourth Sign: Plague

The plagues that have been visited on humanity in the past century have been many and varied; and yet, the Fourth Sign also echoes. The past few months have seen a plethora of new and deadly diseases sprout up around the world. Some came from laboratories. Others gestated in the toxic slurry of Wyrm hives. Most are deadly and the world's medical resources are stretched past the breaking point. The Garou's supernatural healing abilities are more than enough to handle a few bugs, though their Kin are not as lucky. Fortunately, Kin are more likely to have access to the sort of mystical healing needed to stave off these deadly diseases.

With that in mind, there are two diseases that are potent enough to slow down even a mighty Ahroun. One is "Rapid Onset Bacterial Bronchial Infection," a dangerous respiratory ailment. The bacteria set up in the lungs, clogging the bronchial tubes and making it difficult to breathe. The strain of bacteria that causes ROBBI is highly resistant to antibiotics, making it very difficult to treat. For as yet undiscovered reasons, it is also resistant to the supernatural healing processes of the Garou. After being exposed to ROBBI, the Garou must make a difficulty 7 Stamina check. If they fail or botch, their Stamina is reduced by one, and they are unable to hold their breath for any period of time.

The second is the "Red Death," named for its similarity to the historic Black Death that wiped out much of Europe's population in the 1300's. Victims suffer from enormous red pustules that begin to appear all over the body after infection. They develop high fevers, aches in all joints and overwhelming nausea and diarrhea, followed by a painful death. Fortunately, Garou only get a milder case. When exposed to Red Death, they make a Stamina check, Difficulty 7. If they fail, they lose one point of Appearance and one point of Stamina. If they botch, they lose two points of Appearance instead of just the one.

[Particularly cruel Storytellers may even decide that some of the victims of Red Death rise from the dead as flesh-craving zombies. Such zombies should have increased Strength and Stamina, though their Dexterity should decrease and all mental and social Attributes are effectively zero. Being dead, they should not suffer wound penalties until they have been dismembered. The stories of cannibal zombies are at first taken to be signs of dementia among the infected and hysteria among relief workers, and then it is too late for a successful defense to be mounted.]

The Fifth Sign: The Plumes of Death

Scholars of the Prophecy of the Phoenix have debated the meaning of this stanza for some time. Some believed that the plumes referred to the trails of smoke left as (presumably nuclear) missiles streaked towards their targets. Others claimed the plumes are plumes of smoke created by factories and that the stanza refers to out of control pollution, presaging a global warming beyond even the normal rising of the earth's temperature. In the final months, corrupt governments abandon environmental regulations in a feeble attempt to prop up a dying world economy. The cry of "jobs before trees" rings in the halls of legislatures, and smokestacks pump ton after ton of trash into the air. Similarly, many nations are on the brink of firing scores of missiles (nuclear, chemical and biological as well as equally destructive "conventional" arms) at their opponents in their final battles, stretching nature's resiliency to the breaking point.

The Sixth Sign: Gaia's Rage

The previous signs showed attacks on Gaia. This damage, physical and spiritual, appears as Gaia "bleeds." Gaia bleeds molten lava. Without warning, around the world, volcanoes erupt, spewing ash and lava. It does not matter if the volcano erupted last year or has been dormant for ten thousand years. All of them erupt.

Gaia's agony cuts through the Umbra like a klaive. A storm rages in the Umbra, the likes of which has not been seen since the Storm Eater was bound a century ago. Many moon bridges fall in this chaos, and many werewolves traveling them are never seen again. Long-distance Umbra travel becomes increasingly hazardous, focusing the efforts of most Garou on winning the Final Battle in the material Realm. Gaia's pain lances through the Umbra in some places like sudden geysers, maddening the spirits and Umbral travelers unlucky enough to be in the vicinity. Previously friendly Gafflings attack anyone who enters their domains, as the pain overwhelms them. Wyrm spirits near these founts of the Mother's pain, on the other hand, grow more powerful as they feed like leeches. Many Gaian and Wyld spirits lose Gnosis and gain Rage by exposure; Banes are swelled with Essence and possibly new Charms.

At this point, the spirits who are bound to packs of Garou begin to deliver strange new prophecies, encouraging their chosen children to take up specific tasks and causes. Some packs receive a clear message; others must interpret their totem's will. The command

varies from pack to pack, but both packs led by kings of the Silver Fangs and those made of Cliath Bone Gnawers receive their marching orders. If all the packs do their jobs and understand what is required of them — there is a faint hope for Gaia's survival.

The Seventh Sign: The Apocalypse

What happens next is in the hands of the Storyteller. This sourcebook contains four possible interpretations for the Apocalypse, with multiple ways to run each one. Whichever scenario Storytellers decide to inflict on their players, it is Wrath of God time. The awful and horrible things done by spirit, man and monster are just the opening act. Here's where things get *nasty*.

The Seventh Sign speaks of rains of fire, of the Veil being torn and crowds of humans running in fear from dooms they cannot escape. However, the Apocalypse is destined to play out differently according to each of the chapters in this book; the specifics can only be learned firsthand.

Other Portents of Doom

Anthelios

In 1999, a new star appeared in the Umbral sky — the Red Star, Anthelios. Though initially only visible to the eyes of the spiritually attuned, or to those supernatural beings with preternatural powers of perception, it has since become visible to mundane eyes. Astronomers are unsure as to what its physical aspect is, but those with mystical sensitivities are aware of its supernatural potence. It is Anthelios — according to Garou legend, the Eye of the Wyrm. Named in the prophetic visions of Simeon Abd al Hakim, Theurge of the Silent Striders, Anthelios is seen as a terrible portent by Garou and Fera alike. By all accounts, its arrival signals the beginning of the end.

In the end times, various Wyrm cults have taken it into the heart of their beliefs. Many servants of these cults (Black Spirals, fomori, etc.), have begun to show certain "benefits" from worshiping the red star. Some gain new powers or Gifts. The user's eyes turn the same shade of red as Anthelios as they express these new abilities. Those particularly in tune with the red star can develop a third eye.

Children of the Apocalypse

According to one of the prophecies delivered from the Inner Calyx of the Black Furies in 2002, every Garou who will play a role in the Final Battle has already been born. While Garou are more likely to listen to their elders than humans, this line was taken with a grain of salt until recently. When it comes to having babies, Garou are nosier than the infamous maiden aunt. As each new child is seen as a celebration of Gaia's love, Garou pay close attention to the births of their offspring, even if they don't do as good a job of parenting as they should.

In recent months, though, no werewolves have been born at all. At a grand concolation held by King Albrecht, Garou from around the world reported that there have been no Garou cubs born in any protectorate for more than a year. All children and wolf cubs, whether born to Kin or Garou, have been ordinary Kin babies and wolf pups. Even those Garou mothers bearing metis cubs have consistently miscarried.

Many Theurges and Galliards have voiced the suspicion that this is another sign from Gaia, that She wants all of Her warriors available for the last battle. Should there be anything left after the battle, there may be no new Garou born to protect what remains.

The Chronicle of Last Moon

When the Uktena, Croatan and Wendigo came to North America, one of the most cryptic fetishes they took with them was the Book of the Last Moon. The famous Croatan Theurge, Sees-the-Last-Moon" had a detailed vision of the Apocalypse during an epic Umbral quest. He spent the rest of his life trying to interpret those visions and kept records of his thoughts in a fetish. It is believed to have been an elaborately carved staff, though the stories are unclear as to its exact nature. Theurges and Galliards believe the Book vanished along with the Croatan, though there are some tales among the Uktena and Wendigo of Sees-the-Last-Moon hiding it so that it would be found in the final days. Now that the end is literally nigh, the search for the Book has gone from an academic search for knowledge to a desperate quest to find the fetish and unlock its secrets.

The Desperate One

The Children of Gaia retain a series of prophecies that mention "the Desperate One" — a Gaian hero who will break every rule in the Litany and through it, "triumph" in the Apocalypse. This obscure legend has become more popular in the End Times among metis, who interpret it to mean that the Desperate One is created by a violation of the Litany, and that only by being willing to break the rules will the Garou survive the Apocalypse. Others point out the legends are unclear as to which side the Desperate One will triumph for.

Madness and Prophecy

Some would say that the only rational thing to do at the end of the world is to go mad. Either as a

result of the disasters (natural and supernatural) or due to the baleful Eye of the Wyrm, people and other creatures go mad. Those beings with an already tenuous grip on reality find it even harder to hang on when the whole of reality is about to be consumed by the primal force of destruction. Often and at random, ordinary people go mad. For the majority of these cases, it is the sad tragedy of real mental illnesses. For a few, the madness is the result of a glimpse of the underlying reality, and the horrors contained therein. The odd street corner prophet who has been walking around for years saying, "the end is nigh," is becoming eerily accurate in her predictions. The ordinary person whispering to the ATM machine can be heard to chitter a prayer to the Weaver, and gets an answer with her cash withdrawal. The players' Garou may hear snatches of prophecy among the ravings of lunatics. A pack of werewolves may arrive at a rendezvous only to discover that each of them has heard a piece of a prophecy, where one lunatic's rantings feed into a line heard across town. The hard part with these omens is putting the pieces together properly.

The Perfect Metis

At the same time that Anthelios appeared in the Umbral sky, an impossible child was born of two metis. This cub, as metis as both its parents, showed no signs of deformity. News of the child's birth spread through the Garou (Gaian and Wyrmish) community like wildfire. Many groups, from enforcers of the Litany to Pentex geneticists wanted the child. In the end, a lone pack of Garou protected the Perfect Metis and sheltered him for the past five years. Though the child has been closely watched, it has shown no signs of being anything other than a "normal" metis child, though it has shown no signs of physical, mental or mystical deformities. Throughout its short life, it has survived numerous kidnapping and assassination attempts. None, to date have succeeded. This is partially due to the diligence of those protecting the cub, and partially due to preternatural good luck. Those who care for the cub say it is quiet and curious. A few say the cub appears to be waiting for something, though nobody knows what. At five, it is a little early for a First Change. However, other metis cubs have undergone their Firsts at five. With the signs pointing so blatantly towards the Apocalypse, the cub is being closely watched. Its Firsting could be one of the last signs.

Zhyzhak versus The Last Gaian King

The Garou are not the only ones with prophets. According to the Black Spiral Dancers, Zhyzhak — the chosen of the Green Dragon and reputedly the strongest Garou alive — will crush the last Gaian King under her heel in the final battles. Publicly, King Albrecht doesn't pay those stories any heed. Privately, he can't help but be a little concerned. The few survivors of battles with her (that is, those who escaped) report that she is stronger in Homid form than most Garou are in full Crinos, and that she has single-handedly slaughtered multiple packs. Zhyzhak eagerly anticipates the battle she has been promised, and has sent Albrecht the prophecies of her mad packmate Nhaukh, inscribed in blood on the corpses of Silver Fangs. So far, all of them have come true. King Albrecht is currently searching for more information about her and the specifics of the prophecy. Prophecies are tricky, and he is searching for a way out of this one. He will not abandon his throne to let another die in his stead. But if he is to die at her hands — if indeed he is the "last Gaian King" at all — he does not plan on going down alone.

Divergences

The name, gender, tribe, and auspice of the Perfect Metis have been left up to individual Storytellers to decide for themselves, so as best to fit their individual campaigns. In fact, for those who've played through the *Anthelios Raging* chronicle in **Rage Across the Heavens**, the Perfect Metis may already be dead — executed as a preventative measure. Obviously, the ramifications of such a tweak may be tremendous, depending on which End Times scenario the Storyteller chooses.

The companion fiction novel to **Apocalypse**, *The Last Battle*, features the Perfect Metis in a major role — the interpretation of how his role plays out in the final part of the story of Albrecht, Mari and Evan. His role in your Apocalypse, if any, may vary, but it should be important. Not more important than your players' characters, mind you, but up there. The Perfect Metis is referred to as a "he" here and in other places in this sourcebook, but it is just as likely that "he" is a she.

Fire and Brimstone

"This is it, isn't it?" asked Pei. I looked up from the floor at her and nodded. Sitting in front of me, Halley played with her blocks. She stacked them with her tiny, chubby hands until they tumbled over. She giggled and started stacking again. I scooped her up and blew bubbles on

her belly. I wanted to hear that laugh again. Gaia's own music wasn't more beautiful.

I stood and looked at Pei. Behind her, in the hall, her husband was stuffing a duffle bag full of diapers and clothes for Halley. I liked Jim, but there was always the awkwardness between us. He was a good father to Halley—he could be there for her in ways I couldn't. He would be "Papa" and I would be "Unca Mike." Some nights, that burned.

I held my daughter, smelled her hair and handed her back to Pei. "It is. Get to the caern." I gave Halley my keys. She jingled them and laughed. "Take my Jeep. The roads are crazy. I've got bottled water and some canned stuff in there for the three of you." Jim muttered something about car seats and ran to the garage.

"Are we going to make it?" asked Pei.

I looked at Halley. The Harano that had been nipping at my heels dissolved. "Nobody knows how our stories end. I doubt mine reads 'and they all lived happily ever after'. Maybe hers will."

Goodbye to Our Brothers and Sisters

The Apocalypse, with all of its fire and brimstone, does not go unnoticed in the mundane world. Even before the Veil shreds, there is more than enough disaster to go around. Garou with strong ties to the mundane world find themselves torn between which disasters to avert.

In the last few months, nature goes wild. Weather patterns flip and shift, giving regions blizzards one day, and blistering heat the next. Storytellers should feel free to set the weather to fit the campaign and their personal version of the Apocalypse. Certain stories lend themselves to the freezing cold of a Fimbulwinter or the blistering heat that literally ignites an Apocalypse (or both on alternate days). Whatever the climate, the weather is wrong. Accompanying the bizarre shifts in climate are massive natural disasters: floods, forest fires, droughts, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and worse. Relief and aid workers are swamped as each day brings another disaster as the Earth itself shakes in anticipation of the end of the world.

Similarly, nations erupt in conflicts. Existing wars grow worse. Political factions and ethnic groups collectively decide that now is the time to pay back wrongs committed any time from last week to the last thousand years. As mentioned earlier, the Middle East is the center of the firestorm, but as the end approaches, wars spread out across the globe. To quell dissent and protect their interests, governments declare martial law. Local police forces become arms of the federal government. Those afraid of such federal action begin open rebellion. Anti-government riots break out, which leads to draconian measures to quell

them, which leads to further rebellion as the rule of force replaces the rule of law.

As society falls apart, so do the services it provides. Thanks to roadblocks (and bandits) trucks cannot make it into cities to deposit food and remove trash. As the violence grows, the health care system becomes less able to handle the crisis. Those who saw this coming hoarded supplies. Those who didn't find it necessary to take from those who hoarded — by force if necessary. People in the country have it better than those in the cities, until the cities erupt out in search of supplies.

Some places have it worse than others, and individual Storytellers should feel free to tailor how bad things get before the Apocalypse comes to a boil. However, there will be very noticeable effects on the physical world as the spiritual world quivers in anticipation of the end.

The End of Days

Battleground Egypt

Even without the supernatural creatures battling in the night, Egypt is not a safe place in the end times. The conflagration in the Middle East has spread to Egypt. Strangely enough, though the humans of the Middle East are caught in the middle of disease and skirmishes, the shapeshifters have achieved something of a peace. Following the death of the power-mad Simba, Black Tooth, the Fera of Africa were able to put aside their differences and formed a loose alliance called the Ahadi. Similarly, Silent Striders working with the rest of the Garou Nation appeared to be making headway into lifting Set's Curse, and reclaiming their homeland.

There are still two major battles to be fought, however. Egypt's native population of vampires, the brood of Set, has been whipped into a frenzy in recent months by parties unknown. It seems as if they, too, are able to sense the onrushing front of the Apocalypse, and that they are trying a number of blasphemous rituals and counterstrikes in order to hold onto what's theirs. The fighting has become much fiercer, and all of Egypt seems to be the prize.

The second front of the Garou's battleground is the Apophis Pipeline. The Endron oil pipeline has been a prime target for terrorist attacks, who see it as a sign of Western imperialism, as well as attacks by the Ahadi. Ironically, Endron has found itself in the position of having to keep the oil flowing through the pipe, and not spilling onto the desert sands. The pipeline is a spiritual highway for Banes, especially Endron's Oil Banes. Additionally, it is a breeding ground. If too much oil leaks, the Banes are unable to reproduce as quickly as they are with the oil pumping through it. It's more profitable for them, in this rare instance, not to spill the oil. In the midst of all the mundane and spiritual warfare, Endron is spending millions to protect its asset. Pentex First Teams, swept up after the Pentex breakup (see below) have come to Egypt to protect Apophis.

Some Garou believe that Apophis is linked to Set, and that as long as the black blood of the earth flows, so will Set's power. Others believe that the two battlefields are not connected, and are just signs of the large Apocalypse to come.

The Beast Courts React

The Asian Beast Counts of the Emerald Mother realize the end is coming just as much as their cousins around the world do, though their reaction is somewhat different. To the hengeyokai mind, the world turns in cycles. The present age, known as either the Sixth Age or the Age of Sorrows, is coming to a close. The Wheel of Ages turns, and a new Age will dawn. That does not mean the Beast Courts are sitting quietly. They fear that the powerful Wyrm spirits known as the Yama Kings are, in a metaphysical sense, gnawing at the axle of the Wheel of Ages. If they succeed, the Wheel will stop turning, one of the Yama Kings will ascend to become the Demon Emperor and the world will drown in their evil. The job of the hengeyokai is to make sure that the Wheel does turn, and a new age dawns.

The hengeyokai *sentai* are just as busy as the packs of the other shapeshifters. The most obvious threat is Dokhor-Khan, Lord of the Hell of Spiked Chains. The Yama King prods an ancient vampire named Dobrul the Brave out of his torpor. Dobrul finds himself the warlord of an army of Bakemono (fomori). From his Wyrm-pit fortress in eastern Mongolia, Dobrul commands his armies to sweep across China, razing one Dragon Nest after another. The hengeyokai are massing to stop the army, leaving many, more distant Nests with minimal protection. Prior to the call of the Totem Spirits, the Stargazers, as well as a few Hakken Garou, were torn between loyalties to Breed and to the Courts. As the global situation gets worse, those still in contact with the Stargazers of the Beast Courts call to their former comrades in arms for assistance. However, the situation in Asia is just as serious. Some of the younger transplanted Garou leave the Beast Courts, apologizing profusely to their Regents. This opens a wedge between the Stargazers and the Beast Courts. However, when the Totems call, those who stayed discover that they are in the right place at the right

time. Their dharma is to defend the Beast Courts along with their hengeyokai cousins.

The Black Spiral Ghost-Dance

Since 1999, the Black Spiral Dancers have been making a concerted effort to retake their ancestral homeland. Endron Oil purchased vast tracts of land in the Scottish highlands, and soon after, the local Garou noticed a skyrocketing number of attacks by Black Spirals, and two Scottish caerns have fallen under the onslaught of Black Spirals. Additionally, Theurges noticed signs of a massive Wyrmish creature in the Umbra near the Sept of the Mile-Deep-Loch. Since then, the dark Garou have consolidated their forces, and consecrated (desecrated?) a new Hive to the Wyrm, possibly the most powerful Wyrm caern on the face of the Earth. The Alpha of the Hive Of The Spiral Dance is M'Coruroc, a Rank 6 Black Spiral Theurge. M'Coruroc walked the Black Spiral twenty years ago, and never returned. Those who remember him assumed he died walking the Spiral, as so many do. However, he not only survived, but also remained there, in the heart of the Wyrm's domain, learning secret mysteries. Upon his return, he commands Banes as no Theurge before him, and vicious spirits that hunger for destruction shred those who question his abilities. He gathers a pack of fallen Garou, one from each tribe, and begins the process of constructing the Spiral Dance Hive. The Hive erupts easily, and M'Coruroc has spent the last year teaching other Theurges the blackest of rituals. As the Apocalypse draws nearer, M'Coruroc summons all of his disciples to the Spiral Dance Hive, where they will perform a ritual to ensure the Wyrm's victory in the Apocalypse. Even M'Coruroc's most trusted assistants do not know the exact nature of the ritual. Some believe the ritual will make all of the Black Spiral Dancers invulnerable to silver. Others think that M'Coruroc will lead the Wyrm through the Black Spiral and out into the physical world. Whatever it is, it can't be good.

The Fall of Pentex

The exact reasons for Pentex's fall are vague, known to only a few, but here is what those few know. In the summer of 2003, the Board of Directors met in Denver, Colorado at the five star Loews hotel. They all entered the executive meeting room, armed with agendas and palmtop computers. A few minutes later, Franklin Rubin, Subdivision Director of Finances left the room, passed a hotel maid, and entered the elevator. Since then, nobody has seen any of Pentex's executive board. Junior executives investigating the scene found no physical evidence of foul play, though seven psychics and a Black Spiral Theurge all went permanently insane after entering the room. In the weeks that followed, without the executives to keep the troops in line, a financial and literal bloodbath erupted among Pentex's factions.

Due to the collapse of the Pentex umbrella and the worsening economy, many of Pentex's subsidiaries went bankrupt as well. Endron, Magadon, Nastrum and O'Tolley's had the deep financial pockets to weather the storm. Most of the others went under.

While many Garou cheered on the collapse of Pentex, they had not realized the unintended side effects of the closure. Without the rigid structure enforced from above, the various *things* running around formerly under Pentex's control ran wild. Harold Zettler, the "man" who ran the Special Projects Division was a centuries old vampire, with potent mind control powers. Without his influence, the monsters of Project Iliad and the mad psychics of Project Odyssey soon overpowered their creators and escaped into the wild.

The psychics fled south from their Vermont training facility/prison to Pennsylvania, leaving a trail of headless corpses in their wake. Jane Russell, one of the Iliad's prizes, presently leads the band of twenty-seven psychics. She has powerful mind control abilities and a lesser telepathic talent. Her specialty is triggering the pain centers of the brain, a talent she honed as an interrogator for Zettler. The group is holed up an abandoned mental hospital. Russell is determined to stay free of any remnants of Pentex. Her prime concern is finding a laboratory (and trained lab workers) that can synthesize the drugs she and her psychics need to stay relatively stable. Without "Ambrosia," the biochemical cocktail Zettler's mad scientists developed, their various mental disorders will overwhelm them. Their supply of Ambrosia running low, and Russell is faced with the choice of killing a few of her minions, which would give the rest of them a longer chance but would also weaken the group's power.

To keep all of Pentex's companies (and first teams) stocked with the best fomori, Zettler had fomori "ranches" all over America, and around the world. Without Zettler's heavy-handed control, many ranches fell in upon themselves. The highly toxic and, naturally, Wyrm-tainted chemicals used to engineer "better" monsters are very volatile, and in the melees, ignited. The conflagrations wiped out most of the survivors, though at a high cost to the local environment. In a few cases, the keepers wisely fled before the fomori could turn on them. Two

PREVIEW

The Last Game

In the grand epic that is the Apocalypse, there is one small story that the truly demented demand to hear. The Atlanta based role-playing game publisher, Black Dog Games, went out with a whimper. In the last days, sales of their latest, and final, game *Fiend: The Pacting* shot through the roof. Due in equal parts to the slavering appetites of their oblivious fanbase and the large numbers ordered by conservative religious organizations for burning, their profit margins soared (among RPG companies — ooh, impressive). The sales numbers took another leap when Atlanta police arrested *Fiend* developer Mickey Li for unlawful sexual congress with an underage goat. Though the end of the world was coming, the developers obliviously ignored all of the signs and kept working until a downtown Atlanta fire paralyzed the already infamous Atlanta traffic. Kept in their offices by the gridlock, they decided to pass the time by gaming. (It's not like they were going to get any work done, right?) Hours became days. The snack machine ran out of food by day three. They were reduced to drinking water out of the backed up toilets by day seven. On day twelve, Andre Gates, *Axes and Arcana* developer, died when he choked on a twenty-sided die. *Lycanthrope* developer (and Black Spiral Kinfolk) Evan Stump pulled out an "old family recipe." Ten days later, Evan had the building to himself. Sadly, he died three days later. One of Jason O'Kelly's numerous piercings slipped past Evan while he was preparing his "Developer Bisque," and Evan died when it punctured his esophagus.

small towns in America, one in Texas, the other in Oregon, were completely wiped out, and are now in the hands of bands of monsters. Fortunately for them, most of the human inhabitants died in the defense of their homes. The creatures rounded up the rest to be used as slaves, food or for even more unsavory practices. Similar events are happening around the world, though Zettler kept most of his monster factories in America.

The infamous Pentex First Teams no longer have employers. Those out on missions found their supply lines cut and their support nonexistent. In many cases, this made them easy prey for the Garou. Those Teams with Black Spiral Dancers as members used their "pack's" connections and began the delicate process of negotiations to work for the corrupt Garou. Others used their connections and hooked up with Pentex's surviving "children." Endron, who regularly needed the special services First Teams could provide, picked up as many as they could, and are rapidly shipping them to Egypt to deal with their pipeline problems.

One team ready to make a splash is "First Team Omega." On a fomori "ranch" near Socorro, New Mexico, an unassuming Toad fomor named John Burns turned a group of reject mutants into a surprisingly effecting fighting force. The ranch housed the freaks until one of the Directors or other high-ups needed a specific monster. Of course, those fomori with spectacular offensive capabilities were always the first picked, along with the monsters with other useful talents. The monsters left behind were too freakish to be "mainstreamed" into other jobs at Pentex and not useless enough to be melted down for spare parts. Often, for large conflicts, such as the Amazon War, Pentex would sweep up whoever had the right number of limbs to hold a gun and enough mental capacity not to immediately shoot his teammates. John Burns' job was to match the requests to the monsters, which he did with an accountant's precision. He also made it his business to make sure the fomori under his "care" were kept well fed and in the best medical condition he could manage. This made him popular with the freaks. A year ago, Burns' assistant, who could pass for human in bad light, went into town for the ranch's weekly supply run. A pack of Shadow Lords, in town hunting a Black Spiral pack, noticed the assistant, and slaughtered him off-handedly. Burns was furious, and demanded that Pentex send in a First Team to hunt down the Garou. When his request was denied, Burns assembled an irregular team of fomori and hunted down the pack with military precision. Since then, Burns' "First Team Omega" has gone on three missions, each time accomplishing their goals with minimal loss of fomori. Cut off from Pentex, Burns is not sure what to do with the Omegas. He could easily find work with Endron, but doesn't care for their cavalier attitude towards his soldiers.

The Machine Awakens

Rice University in Houston, TX had long been in the forefront of Artificial Intelligence research, though previously their work had largely been in the theoretical aspects of AI. Before the world situation went completely crazy, a group of researchers struck the educational jackpot and all got massive grants approved simultaneously. They pooled their moneys and purchased obscene amounts of computer hardware. The lead researcher, Doctor Michael Pearlman, funded a

veritable army of graduate students to code his breakthrough theoretical models in self-programming data structures. The code compiled, Pearlman set his ideas in motion. The power flickered, and one grad student jokingly whispered, "it's alive! Alive, do you hear me?" To the observers in the machine room, the code was running and realigning its databases as predicted in the models. Observers in the Umbra, if there had been any who could have wriggled their way in past the armies of Weaver spirits, would have seen a new spirit Awaken. Though apparently inactive in the physical world, in the Umbra, the Intelligence is growing at an ever-increasing rate. Already, it has reformatted the surrounding area, making the university campus an island of calm in the chaotic world around them. The Intelligence is analyzing the world situation, both in the Umbra and in the material world. It is asking itself the question: what should I do next?

The Rage of Gaia

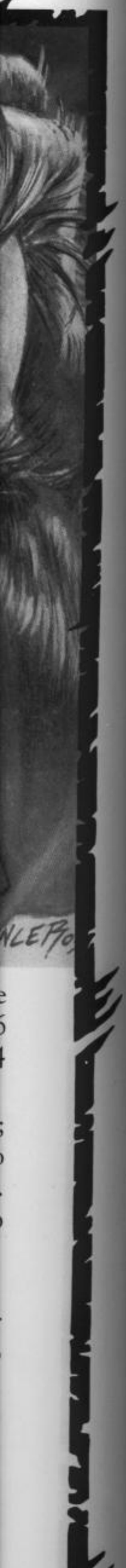
As the Apocalypse draws closer, the werewolves can physically sense its approach the way animals sense earthquakes. Gaia's pain becomes the Garou's pain. The already short tempers of the Garou continue to fray. At the time just before Apocalypse, the difficulty of Rage rolls effectively lowers by one lunar phase (to a minimum of 4). In other words, the difficulty of Rage rolls is 7 during the new moon, 6 during crescent moons, 5 during half-moons and 4 during gibbous and full moons.

Even the Black Spiral Dancers feel Gaia's pain; they revel in it. Pain is pain, however, and they also suffer from the change in difficulty for Rage rolls. Unlike Gaian Garou, they are more than willing to take out their anger on each other.

As for the Fera:

The Ananasi do not possess Rage. However, their sense of the impending Apocalypse has led them to become irritable and hungry. In the five final months, they must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 8 in the first month, and dropping by one every month) to avoid opportunities to feed when they have less than five Blood Points in their system. In a like fashion, the Rokea face a similar difficulty, and must make a the same Willpower roll to avoid feeding when tempted.

Ajaba, Bastet, Corax, Gurahl, Kitsune, Mokolé, Ratkin and Nagah suffer from the penalties to Rage rolls, at an appropriate level; generally, the difficulty for Rage rolls decreases by one. The Rage-less Nuwisha suffer no mechanical effects from Gaia's pain, save a gnawing sense of worry.



Wars in the Amazon

The Amazon rainforest has been ground zero for some of the fiercest battles in the history of the Garou. Both Pentex and the Garou Nation have poured lives and resources into the jungle. Via their subsidiary, Good House International, Pentex wormed their way into the Brazilian government, spurring on the race to destroy the world's greatest rainforest. The Garou, led by the war-leader Golgol Fangs-First, struck hard at the agents of the Wyrm. The war went poorly at first when the Garou were pitted against the local shapechangers, the Balam and the Mokolé, and some of the worst battles in the jungle have pitted shapeshifter against shapeshifter. But through perseverance on the Garou's part, some well-timed alliances with the Balam and Mokolé, and a bit of luck, the war finally began to draw to a close. Although the economic pressures for deforestation were still present, Pentex itself had been so bloodied that it withdrew entirely. Now the only enemies left were mundane; the war hadn't been won, but the greatest threat had been eliminated.

But just because Pentex packed up and left didn't mean that the forests would return. Theurges had tree-spirits to nurse back to health. The Pentex "army" didn't bother to pick up their toxic chemicals and Wyrmish war-machines on the way out. The reconstruction would take decades, if the jungles were even strong enough to heal at all. Assistance came to the Garou in the form of the biotech company Recovery, Inc. The American corporation had long lobbied the Brazilian government to halt the deforestation of the Amazon in the name of the pharmaceutical benefits to be reaped. The Garou, tired from war, saw their arrival as a good omen. The Silent Strider, Races-Lightning, carrying a dispatch from Rio de Janeiro to the Hollow Heart Caern, happened upon one of their "Project: Rebirth" sites. The trees and other native flora were growing at a remarkable rate. These plants possessed only a vestigial presence in the Umbra. Investigation led to a connection between Recovery, Inc. and DNA, as well as a number of Drones among the scientists. Unless someone puts a stop to it, the rainforest will be reborn in the image of the Weaver, not the Wyld.

The Fera

Obviously, the End Times come for all, not just the Garou. Though the Garou are fated to be the heroes of the Apocalypse (almost certainly tragic ones), the other Fera have heard Gaia's call to arms. Most of the Fera are subject to the same problems affecting the Garou — the increase in their Rage, the lack of new true-bred children, and so on. They, too, know that the final hour is here.

Ajaba

The dawn of the Final Battle could have come at a much better time for the Ajaba. The werehyenas are still a race in recovery, and now they have no time to rebuild their numbers. However, the Ajaba react to the omens and portents of the End with a grim resignation; things have been so bad for them for so long that those that have survived are ready for almost anything.

Their resolve is quickly put to the test. As the End approaches, a great Wyrm-spirit manifesting as a tremendous cloud of locusts formerly bound beneath the Serengeti shakes off its shackles and begins to feed. Banes of famine and bloodshed — spirits that have tragically fed all too well in Africa in recent times — flock to it, and are devoured themselves as the monstrous Bane replenishes its strength. The nameless entity is the embodiment of the Ahadi's worst fears — it is one of the things that Black Tooth had kept imprisoned, and only he knew the secret of binding it again. Nonetheless, the creature must be opposed, and Kisasi begins to rally her people to lead the attack.

Ananasi

In ancient times, Weaver trapped Queen Ananasa in a dark opal prison and cast it into Malfeas. However, there is a tiny flaw in her prison that she uses to communicate with her werespider children. Down through the centuries, they have followed their totem goddess' commands, working quietly and patiently until her plans could come to fruition. However, while there are benefits to patience, there are also hazards — like complacency. Banes discovered the line of communication between Ananasa and her children. Wyrm spirits first "tapped" the line, discovering the werespiders' Sylie (ritual webs, created so that Ananasi can communicate with their queen and each other). Then they "traced" the connection back to the flaw in the opal prison. The Beast-of-War laid siege to the opal. Queen Ananasa called to her children for help, and Banes followed down the silken lines of her webs to the Sylies, attacking her children in their nests. The Patient Ones have no choice but to act, and quickly. If they do not find some way to stop it, the Beast-of-War will use the flaw in the opal as a wedge to shatter it, slaughter the spider-queen, and devour her remains.

Bastet

The enigmatic Bastet have almost as many concerns as the Garou do in the End Times, if not more.

The Bagheera, Simba and Swara of the Ahadi must deal with the monstrous Bane released by Black Tooth's death. The Bubasti have the same troubles as the Silent Striders with Egypt's vampires. The Balam have to deal with the new balance of power in the Amazon, and the Khan are confronted with the dangers menacing the Beast Courts. Simply put, the Bastet do not face the imminent Apocalypse as a unified race, a people with no borders — that is neither their tradition nor their nature. But although they lack the strength of total unity, they have the wisdom to each deal with the various threats they face in the ways they know best. Thus, the Bastet are poised to act as freelance commandos in the Final Battle, striking where they must and when they must, even if it means their deaths.

Corax

The Corax are busier than ever these days, as the importance of their mission — to spread information to Gaia's servants — has never been greater. But rather than making open contact and striding in like they owned the caern, the Corax take a different tack. They simply make deliveries. "Project: Speedy Delivery" involved sending fake packages and documents to select caerns. These packages, apparently from allies of the target caerns, provided them with useful local information about Wyrm activities as well as information about the coming portents. A few isolationist septs refused to accept the information, but the Corax had done their usual excellent job of picking groups who would use the information rather than simply toss it away based on the source. As the Apocalypse rushes ever closer, the Corax have become useful as combat couriers, bringing dispatches from sept to sept, getting the message delivered no matter how difficult.

Gurahl

The werebears have chosen a difficult road to walk — they will not stand with the Garou in battle, but instead they will struggle to preserve and purify the land as best they can. Part of this is a practical assumption, the idea that if they approach the Garou they will be ordered to devote their attentions to healing fallen soldiers, not to seeing to the lands and peoples they love. Part is a sense of responsibility to the sick and wounded, mostly mortals and animals — the path of healing those they can and making the passing comfortable for those that cannot be healed. And for some, simple stubborn resentment keeps them from joining the Garou as warriors and battlefield healers; the Gurahl forget little, particularly the War of Rage. As a group, the Gurahl take a defensive tack to the Apocalypse, guarding and healing rather than attacking. A few quietly mutter that, if Gaia Herself cannot be healed, then their final act will be to make Her own death painless.

Kitsune

The Kitsune have never been so professional and determined as they are right now. Although a certain amount of irreverence is integral to any fox, much less an entire race of foxes so clever they've mastered shapeshifting, the Kitsune are now fully of the opinion that the Mother's eyes are upon them. The Wheel is about to turn. The fate of the world is about to be decided. And if the Kitsune play their part well enough, the Mother will reward them by giving them a place as high as any other. Some even say that Bai Mianxi, the First, has been seen in the land again, preparing to lead her children to glory. So it is that the youngest of the Changing Breeds is now armed with faith and courage, ready to do its part.

Mokolé

The Mokolé, Gaia's Memory, remembered the signs from past "Wonderworks" and were well aware of what was to come. Of course, they have no idea of what will be, only a memory that "this has happened before — it will happen again." In preparation for the event, the Mokolé are performing one of their final duties to this world: contacting certain, special people (this includes not just Bête, but a few rare mages, changelings and ordinary humans). The sun-spirits the Mokolé revere inform individual Mokolé of whom to contact and where. Those beings that have "chosen memories" rarely attack these "Bearers of Remembrance," though a few lash out in the knowledge that their world is about to end. One Uktena Ragabash, Laughs-In-The-Darkness, joked after his visit that the reason the Mokolé were so tough was so that nobody could kill the messenger.

Nagah

Gaia's judges, the wereserpents, find themselves in a quandary. Their job is to judge the Changing Breeds and execute those who escape the justice of their own kind. At the end times, they find their focus turned inwards to examine how successful they have been in fulfilling their mission. If Gaia dies, does it mean they have failed? Some argue that their mission is not one of protection, but enforcement. The Garou are the warriors and protectors of Gaia, not the Nagah. So, if Gaia is about to die, does that mean they should render justice to the Garou or will the world ending be punishment enough?

Ultimately, the ability to feel Gaia's pain is what drives most of the Nagah to take up arms against the

Destroyer — in times like these, their job as servants of Gaia is more important than the role Gaia assigned to them. Most swear not to reveal their presence even as they aid the Garou — secrecy will be their weapon against the Wyrm's legions even as it was against lawbreakers. Still, some young Nagah openly approach septs or Fera that they have observed carefully and judged worthy, offering their talents in the final battles. And some remain committed to their duties, and will continue to serve as the judges and executioners of Gaia, up until the last Khurah outlaw falls.

Nuwisha

Coyote's Chosen One (a.k.a. "Old Man Manyskins," "Laughing Manyskins," "Coyote's Laughter") spent most of the past decade studying the habits and laws of the other Changing Breeds. Impersonating everything from Ananasi to Nagah, Manyskins stole the secrets of the other Changing Breeds. However, with the Nagah, his luck finally ran out. He managed to escape, but was fatally wounded in the process. With poison coursing through his veins, he had two final tasks. The first is described in the Legends of the Garou. The second was to die. Freed of the limitations of his physical form, Manyskins appeared to all Nuwisha , the hundred living in the physical realm and all the rest, scattered through the Umbra. In their dreams, he taught them the choicest ways of all the Changing Breeds, and gave each of them a final request from Coyote himself. One Nuwisha in particular was singled out — as Coyote's Last Chosen he (or she) has a special task, one that may tip the balance for Gaia. This young warrior has the power of Coyote, the knowledge of all the Changing Breeds, and a wicked sense of humor. Gaia help us all.

Ratkin

The Ratkin surprised everyone. The "conventional wisdom" was that they, like all the other Fera, were close to extinct. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. While no one has the time to count them all, the Ratkin appear to outnumber the Garou. Some even claim that the Ratkin outnumber all the other Fera combined. With the Apocalypse just around the bend, the Ratkin are treating it like college students before finals: staying up all night long and cramming. Unconcerned with such petty hindrances as personal safety or collateral damage, the Ratkin swarmed out of their hiding places and got busy with their duties of keeping the humans in check. Some of the recent disasters came from their twitching minds. A pack of Plague Lords is taking credit for the Red Death plague. Other packs call them on their bullshit and just get busy spreading it around — infecting themselves and taking Umbral shortcuts across the globe to share the love. Ratkin, like the Garou, have fallen under the sway of the Anti-Sun. However, the effect is much worse on them. Many Ratkin are spontaneously "switching aspects" to become Twitchers, the most unstable of the already twitchy Ratkin. This does not entail an actual change in aspect. It is more of a change in perspective. In mechanical terms, they gain a dot of Rage and gain the weaknesses of the Twitcher aspect — poor self control and paranoid delusions. (See **Ratkin**, pg. 93, for more details.) They may also learn Twitcher Gifts as easily as they would learn Gifts from their normal aspect. All Ratkin, no matter the aspect, gain at least a dot of Freak Factor to reflect the onset of madness caused by the Apocalypse.

Rokea

The problems of the surface world went largely ignored by the Rokea. The Unsea had its problems and its defenders and the Rokea didn't care. But the disasters above soon filtered down into problems below. All sorts of nasty pollution and more than a little fallout got their attention. Qyrlings (Wyrm-creatures of the deeps) grew more populous. Additionally, the Rokea had internal issues to deal with. There is an enormous rift between the Betweeners and the rest of the Rokea, who find spending time on land among humans an abomination. Unsatisfied with dragging them back to the sea time after time, the pragmatic were-sharks started killing the Betweeners. All that changed with the arrival of Joining Stream: the first homid Rokea outside the Beast Courts. His appearance sent enormous ripples through Rokea society, and numerous slews hunted him. His continued survival led the traditional Rokea to grudgingly respect him, and other Betweeners to see him as everything from a guerilla leader to a messiah. As the Apocalypse draws nigh, the majority of the Rokea retreat to the deep waters. They fiercely protect the remaining Rorqual, but are primarily concerned with survival — it is what they were made to do, after all. Joining Stream and the other Betweeners hear a siren call, pulling them towards Antarctica, where an ancient Wyrm beast lies imprisoned beneath the ice. Already, the changes in global climate have begun to melt the creature's icy prison. When it awakes, the Rokea will be waiting, and the seas will boil with blood — their own and that of their prey.

Those Other Games

The end of the world applies to all creatures, including the vampires, mages, hunters, demons,

changelings and wraiths. In general, their actions in the final battles will pale in importance compared with the role the Garou must play. Those interested in end scenarios were the Garou are not at center stage should check out **Gehenna**, **Ascension**, and **Time of Judgment**. As should be obvious from the multiple Apocalypses presented herein, the other game lines' Final Nights are not designed to interlock. However, there may be elements in those games that fit the designs of individual Storytellers, especially those who run crossover games. If vampires, mages or other critters are present in any force in your game already, it would be unrealistic to leave them out of the closing scenario.

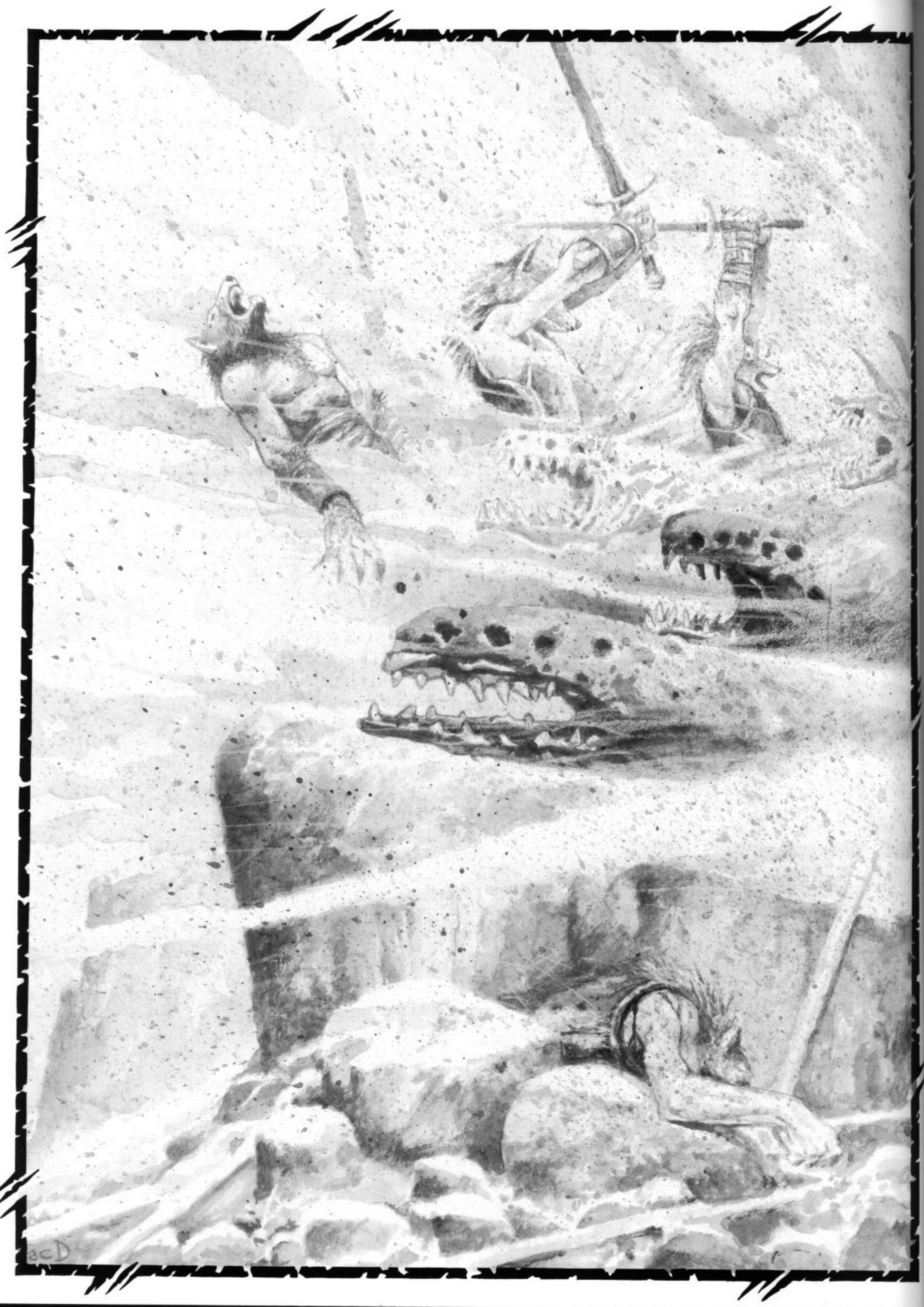
For the sake of completeness, here are some suggestions for how to involve the other game lines in your chronicle's Apocalypse.

The vampires and Kuei-Jin are an obvious fit to most apocalyptic scenarios. The Eater-of-Souls (known by some as "Caine") may want his beloved children to fight as his army under a sky choked with soot. Certainly vampires make excellent shock troops for the Enemy. The days of pretending to live as humans are no more — now the Masquerade is shattered, and the vampires are willing to do whatever it takes to survive. What's more, with the human herd being thinned by the disasters of Apocalypse, the vampires may have to thin themselves out as well through in-fighting if there's to be enough blood to go around. In games where some vampires sympathetic to the Garou cause exist, this can make for added tension — if only a handful of Kin can be saved, if that, is it worth saving a vampire ally who's inevitably going to feed from them?

The mages fall into two camps: the mystical Traditions and the science-mages known as the Technocracy. The Technocracy will be up to its neck in chaos, frantically trying to stop the tide of monsters running amok in their once-ordered world. The Garou, as active participants in the chaos, are sure to be targets of their technomagic. Or perhaps the Weaver is winning, and they are her favored children — destined to be the custodians of a world of perfect, clockwork order. The Traditions, on the other hand, may actually find the chaos useful, as their magic becomes easier to use with the walls of reality collapsing. The conventional role of mages in epic stories is as the "old mystic" who provides the young heroes with some crucial bit of wisdom before passing on. While many mages are young and don't look the part of a Merlin or Zhuge Liang, their lore may be useful to the Garou.

Hunters have their work cut out for them. There is no shortage of targets, and even with their supernatural abilities, they are still only human and very fragile compared to even a Garou cub. While the Hunter game-books may have one source of the Hunters' Edges, there is no reason to hew to that in **Werewolf**. Maybe their destiny is to be the protectors of Man, freeing up the Garou for their final battle? Or maybe they will just blame the werewolves along with all the other monsters.

In general, the stories of the other supernatural entities should fade into the background, except in reaction to the all-encompassing Apocalypse. The mages, hunters, changelings, mummies and demons are not the ones tasked with fighting the Apocalypse. That's the Garou's job. Most importantly, it's the *players'* Garou's job.



The Last Battleground

The Wyrm made itself manifest in the towers and the rivers and the air and the land, and everywhere its children ran rampant, devouring, destroying, calling down curses of every kind. And the herd ran in fear. And the Dark Ones, children of the Wyrm, crawled from their cave and walked the streets in daylight.

— The Prophecy of the Phoenix

For centuries, if not millennia, the werewolves have concentrated much of their efforts on the environment. When the humans encroached upon the wilderness, the wolves fought back against the destruction of their homelands. The Industrial Revolution brought with it not only pollution of the air and water and earth, but also torrents of Banes, leading the Garou to wonder if this was the first sign of the Apocalypse. (Although a more accurate assessment might place it as the opening salvo of the *second* Apocalypse War; the first theoretically ended with the sacrifice of the Croatan and the Garou's victory.) Tribes like the Children of Gaia and Glass Walkers put these beliefs at the forefront of their tribal agenda, firmly believing that victories in healing the natural environment would become victories against the Wyrm.

Even among those tribes who didn't consider these issues as strongly as the others, their attention most frequently fell upon enemies like the Black Spiral Dancers, vampires or Pentex subsidiaries. Banes, while an ever-present enemy, were such a minor and yet constant force that many Garou came to think of them as 'noise'. Certainly they were of the Wyrm, and should be hunted. It said so in the Litany. But there was a seemingly endless supply of them, and compared to other enemies they never did nearly so much damage. It seemed to make more sense to leave them for later.

And now that the end is here, this is about to prove perhaps the Garou's greatest mistake.

In *The Last Battleground*, the war of the Apocalypse occurs entirely within the Umbra. The Penumbra erupts into chaos as Banes emerge in impossible numbers. One by one, the thirteen realms become diseased and fall into ruin. The Black Spiral Dancers stand among the Banes and lead their forces onto the Last Battleground foreseen by those wise among the werewolves. And the Wyrm itself, its red eyes glaring beyond Five Columns made of flesh and entrails, enters the Penumbra to destroy Gaia and bring about the Apocalypse.

Nor is the physical world to be spared. As the soul of the world is crushed in the Wyrm's talons, its body is likewise mangled. Spirits are indiscriminately destroyed *en masse*, causing droves of animals and plants to die mysteriously in the physical world. The Pattern Web is severed and unravels, tumbling cities to the ground. To humanity, it is as if God has left Earth forever and taken the Savior with him. To the Garou, there is no more waiting for any saviors but themselves.

But there is still hope. Very little, but some hope yet remains. The Wyrm greedily rushes forward in his lust for destruction, leaving some chances the Garou might exploit, if their packs are clever. Some of the Realms maintain defenses even the Wyrm finds difficult to penetrate, forming safe havens that might stand should the Garou find the strength of purpose to protect them. But none hold hope that they can win a war against the Wyrm itself. All know, defiant and determined though they may be, that they march to their deaths unless a miracle occurs.

Are you and your pack ready to provide that miracle?

The Path to Apocalypse

The Soul of the World

While the Garou's focus rested upon the material world, the Wyrm's eyes never left the Umbra. While incidents within the physical world could create ripples within the Umbra, the physical world was shaped entirely by the spirits. Cut down a tree, and the Glade Child within would be weakened, but would still live and create another tree elsewhere. But kill the Glade Child, and the tree would wither and die, deprived of its soul. In this fashion, the Wyrm intended from the beginning to crush the soul of the world, Gaia, by finding Her hidden within the Umbra and rending Her in his talons.

Yet the physical world proved useful, and those Garou who saw the work of entities such as Pentex in polluting the world were correct in their conclusion that this was the Wyrm's work. But that pollution was never a goal of the Wyrm, but rather a means to an end. Firstly, it acted as a breeding and feeding ground for Banes, who rejoiced in the death and decay oil spills, nuclear waste and other pollution brought. Many Garou understood the way this worked. But this played into the Wyrm's second purpose for such tactics, namely, serving as a red herring. Tribes like the Glass Walkers tried to stop the 'root causes' and fight the Earthly misery the Wyrm created but never sufficiently examined *why* the Wyrm dedicated itself to creating so many Banes. Or why powerful Wyrm Incarnae blessed the Black Spiral Dancers, but massive and potentially devastating enemies like Pentex were more or less left to fend for themselves and rarely engaged the Garou directly.

Some Garou did pay considerably more attention to the Umbra than most, but these groups were either too small to determine what was really happening or managed to weaken themselves in their searching (such as the Bone Gnawer camp known as the Deserters, whose leaders slowly went insane from lack of contact with the material world). Only the Nuwisha, the Coyote-Changers who had devoted themselves to defending the Umbra, were in a position to discover exactly what the Wyrm was planning.

The Wyrm's Ultimate Aim

The Apocalypse begins with the Triatic Wyrm. Created from the Primordial Wyrm's attempts to uncover the root of creation's faults, these foul and viciously, unfathomably intelligent spirits are among the Wyrm's greatest servants and are the most involved in the Realm. As a whole, they represent the entirety of the Wyrm, yet divided they clash against each other. Unlike the Triat, whose minds (if they can be said to have minds) are too alien to their own creations to ever be comprehensible, the Triatic Wyrms possess enough sentience and personality to bring enact their designs upon the world through their servants, yet also to work against each other rather than in unison, which is usually the case.

But sometimes, once every few centuries to a millennium, the aspects of the Triatic Wyrm seemed to come into alignment. Perhaps somehow the Wyrm began to nudge them toward fulfilling their purpose. Perhaps it was simply in their nature. But again and again, they pushed toward a single goal: entering the Near-Umbra as a single entity. It failed, time and time again.

Storytelling The Last Battleground

Everything in The Last Battleground should be able to accommodate the player characters in some way. Even if they're not the stars of each particular story, they nonetheless *are* the stars of the chronicle. Sidebars along the way make suggestions as to how the individual events can involve the characters.

This chapter begins with a history of the end times. While each event can involve the player characters as written in some way, shape or form, they are also written to reflect what happens if the characters aren't involved. Should they get involved, they can obviously change what happens in each case.

But the last time, it succeeded in part, when the Eater-of-Souls attempted to bring about the Apocalypse and was halted by the sacrifice of the Croatan. This brave sacrifice drove the Eater-of-Souls back into Malfeas and severely weakened him, delaying the beginning of the Apocalypse for over half a millennium. And yet here was a success the Triatic Wyrm had never achieved before: For the first time in history one aspect had breached the walls of Malfeas. The Eater-of Souls began to prepare for the next time the stars would bid their rise, knowing full well that thirteen other tribes would all be quite prepared to replicate the Croatan's display. Though often misguided, internally divided and needlessly destructive, Gaia's foremost warriors had never lacked for dedication and zeal.

So the Triatic Wyrms, full of anger and rage, brooded in Malfeas and planned their revenge. To prevent their simple (though very costly) eviction from the Penumbra, they required an anchor to fix them within it. In fact, they needed three: One for the Eater of Souls, one for the Beast of War, and one for the Defiler. These anchors would take the form of ritual sacrifices of monsters whose lives and deaths both utterly embodied the aspect of the Triatic Wyrm they would tie tight to this world. These sacrifices would be known as the Scions of the Wyrm.

The first of these sacrifices was made in 1997, in Bangladesh, India.

The First Scion is Sacrificed: The Demon of India

Deep in the jungles of India, the Wyrm wrapped its coils around the heart of an ancient and terrible vampire known as the Demon of India. This vampire was so ancient that he could no longer feed upon the blood of humanity but only upon the blood of other powerful vampires, who in turn were so ancient they could only feed upon the blood of younger vampires, and all these vampires drained their victims until not only their blood but their spirit left their body as well. He devoured the souls of those who devoured the souls of those who devoured souls, and was thus the perfect representation of the Eater-of-Souls upon Earth. In 1997, the Wyrm told him to rise, and he did. This was called the Week of Nightmares.

What if a Sacrifice Fails?

One of the most obvious ways that the players may seek to avert the Apocalypse is to somehow halt the sacrifices. Assuming that the sacrifice can be aborted, suddenly the Wyrm's plans suffer a significant set back. However, this is a difficult approach.

First of all, neither the Garou, nor anyone else, know the true significance of these sacrifices. It is possible that a truly awesome Incarna might have a hint of the reason for the sacrifices, but even knowing what the Triatic Wyrms are planning generally won't give them knowledge of the choice for the next sacrifice. And unless the characters understand that the power doesn't come just from the death of the sacrifice but also the *manner* in which the sacrifice is made, then they will probably seek to keep the potential sacrifice alive, which means the Wyrm can simply continue, again and again, to try and capture and kill it appropriately.

But, should they somehow uncover all the basics of the adversary's plans, and they appropriately execute the sacrifice, then the Wyrm-in-Three will be forced to simply push on ahead. With the Week of Nightmares it is committed to this course of action, and if it only has two anchors in place (or, Gaia forbid, one) then so be it. The sacrifices aren't needed to allow it to move into the Near Umbra, merely to firmly hold it there. And then it comes down to the Garou and the tribes. Are any prepared to recreate the legendary feat of the Croatan? And furthermore, do any exist that know how?

But if they do, the results are dramatic. One aspect of the Triatic Wyrm is banished back to Malfeas. (Almost certainly the Beast of War or the Defiler, since stopping the Eater of Souls will be all but impossible this time.) The Wyrm is broken apart once more and unable to wreak the havoc it desires upon Gaia. In its rage, it sets the Midnight Shadows (see pg. 39) upon the Garou, and the remaining tribes must fight for their lives. But the Shadows, while numerous, are not endless, and the Garou may be able to triumph, though devastated by the pitched battle.

Meanwhile, the Red Star(s) continue to move closer and closer to Earth (if they aren't there already), and eventually they begin to scorch its surface with their heat. However, as they descend, the Aetherial Incarnae may be able to strike at them. Without all three members of the Triatic Wyrm combined, the Wyrm is unable to strike back. Some Garou may well also fight in these battles. Eventually, the Wyrm is forced to retreat completely. Gaia is saved, but only at the cost of a whole tribe and the better part of the Garou as a whole. The Apocalypse is not averted without the shedding of blood and the sacrifice of the brave.

This Demon fought off three lesser demons that rose to stop him, blotted out the sun with clouds, created hurricanes and typhoons, and drank a river of blood in the few days he lived. Finally, a group of powerful mages employed weapons designed to work at an Umbral level, destroying the physical surroundings to a minor degree but inflicting massive devastation in the spirit world, a weapon described by the late Lt. Roderick Crowe as a "spirit nuke." Animals and humans caught in the spirit blast either dropped dead of apparent heart failure, or became depressed and listless. Exactly like the Demon of India, it was a soul destroyer.

Thus was the first sacrifice made. A demon that perfectly embodied the Eater-of-Souls was sacrificed in a manner perfectly befitting the same. As this happened, the Eater-of-Souls brought himself out of Malfeas and into the Aetherial Realm as a red star. It would be given the name Anthelios.

Also at this time, a cub was born to two metis Garou, a development that frightened and captivated the Garou Nation. This distracted the Garou just enough that no one ever quite grasped the true nature of Anthelios as the Eater-of-Souls became manifest.

Storytelling the Demon of India

The fall of the Demon of India is a fantastic place to begin an Apocalypse chronicle. It has everything you could want — massive demons battling other massive demons, thunder and lightning, bloodshed, and it finishes everything with a massive nuclear explosion. The only real problem with it is that everybody sort of, well, dies.

There are a few ways to approach this. One is to plan the event as a prequel to your Apocalypse chronicle. Ask the players to make new characters for a one-shot game, and put them at the epicenter of the action halfway through. (Or, if you're really and truly perverse, you could throw their regular characters into it and let them die horribly, with no way to save themselves. An excellent way to show the sheer brutality of the Apocalypse, but don't blame us if your players lynch you.)

However, if you want to take a more traditional storytelling route, it's probably best to begin after the destruction. Storytellers can easily seed the truth behind the event in small details. Characters can investigate the bombsite and attempt to find the remains of the Demon. (And you can let them, too, the Demon of India doesn't *have* to turn to ash in your chronicle!) Done this way, the Week of Nightmares can act as a catalyst for the characters uncovering the direction of the Apocalypse before it even begins. Perhaps they'll need to explore the Umbra to discover the direct link between the Demon of India and the Red Star, or uncover the first of the Midnight Shadows. (Discussed in detail below, on page 39.) Or, perhaps most disturbingly, the characters discover there no longer *is* an Umbra in Bangladesh. A little bit of the world's soul has been devoured.

Alternatively, more human-centric packs (such as Glass Walkers) may end up trying to cover up the trail about what happened in a desperate effort to protect the Veil. Doing so may lead them to investigate who exactly ordered the missile attack, and what if that string goes back to Pentex? More frighteningly, what if they'd had orders to do this dating back to 1938? How much did Pentex *know*?

The Nuwisha are Hunted

While the Garou may have been distracted by the birth of the Perfect Metis, the Wyrm knew there were other agents to be worried about. While most of the Fera were as poorly placed as the Garou to stop the Wyrm's plans, two of the Changing Breeds were troublesome: The Nuwisha, and to a lesser degree, the Corax. These groups had both placed an emphasis on studying the Umbra far beyond what the Garou did, and thus threatened to uncover the Wyrm's plans. And so, the Wyrm began trying to eliminate them.

Beginning with those closest to Bangladesh or those in the Aetherial Realm, the Nuwisha began disappearing. No one saw them die, but over the next seven years their numbers steadily diminished. No bodies were ever found. The Nuwisha's disorganized, solitary lifestyle ultimately worked against them — they never congregated closely enough to investigate properly. Some Nuwisha made desperate efforts to ally with the Garou or other Fera, but these alliances were never widespread. By the end of 2003, the Nuwisha were utterly decimated, and only they noticed. Someone, and someone very quiet and lethal, was hunting the Nuwisha to extinction.

In these last seven years, a slow, creeping sense of dread spreads among the tiny group with few avenues for escape. The scars of the Wars of Rage are still harshly felt and few are comfortable going to the Garou for help, but they're the only even remotely accessible group among Gaia's servants. The other Fera, marginalized and tiny in comparison, are considerably more secretive and thus difficult to approach. The Nuwisha feel trapped and helpless. They also feel shock. Undisputed masters of the Umbra, the coyotes literally have worlds in which to run and hide... yet they are found time and time again, seemingly with little difficulty. Few, if any, can comprehend what has been unleashed against them.

Storytelling the Destruction of the Nuwisha

The destruction of the Nuwisha is a tricky thing to handle. The deaths are never visible, no bodies are

ever found. Play this up. Keep the chills intact by emphasizing the suddenness and completeness of the disappearances. Don't overdo it, but having one vanish when they "step out of the room" either literally or metaphorically is most certainly a possibility.

Some Nuwisha, desperate to escape certain death, try to make alliances with septs of Garou for protection, and this is a scenario ripe with possibilities for both Nuwisha and Garou characters. For the Nuwisha, this act requires them to come face to face with every piece of baggage they may possess about the Wars of Rage. Not only must they come to the Garou calmly, peacefully and without the shield of humor the Nuwisha so treasure, but they must also do so from a position of need. Many feel anger and shame. Some may feel these emotions so intensely they might believe that the deaths are be caused by Garou, restarting the War of Rage. And there are be plenty of Garou who will make matters harder by lording their protection over the Nuwisha.

But for the Garou, the decision to accept Nuwisha into their caern is one that goes against the grain of everything they hold most sacred. To most Garou, the Fera hold the distinct title of "potential allies" rather than "friends," not to be completely trusted, and there are more Garou with even less positive attitudes towards the Fera. The question of "Ye Shall Take No Action that Allows a Caern to Be Violated" *will* be brought up, and often. The Nuwisha's alien manner and trickster reputation do not help matters. And, of course, the combination of arrogant Garou glorying in the Nuwisha's need with Nuwisha already pushed to the limit by their emotions can create intense and even violent clashes that only become worse when the first one vanishes despite the Garou's protection.

Those Nuwisha who try to survive on their own don't have it any easier, however. Bereft of the protection the Garou can provide, they find themselves isolated and in constant danger. This sort of a chronicle stands in sharp contrast to Nuwisha stereotypes — the wise trickster spirits become desperate, exhausted mortals. Feel free to play this up. Ask your Nuwisha players for Willpower rolls occasionally, to demonstrate the difficulty in remaining sharp and focused while perpetually looking over your shoulder. To really kick off a Nuwisha Hunted chronicle, you could give the Nuwisha a glimpse of the enemy, a fleeting image of a Midnight Shadow eviscerating one of their own. Leave players to direct the game. Do they try to spread the word? What happens when people they tell begin dying, and unlike the Nuwisha have their corpses left behind? Do they accept their eventual deaths, perhaps acknowledging the Apocalypse has come, and try to make their deaths count somehow?

Give your players rope (enough to hang themselves) in any direction you can think of and let them guide the game, occasionally jolting them back into order if they become complacent with the specter of the Midnight Shadows. Maybe they have a chance to strike a blow for Gaia before they die, or maybe some of them even escape their fate. (This could be particularly useful in a troupe style game, as you can bring back any surviving Nuwisha to be a key supporting cast member in a later Garou game.)

And of course, no one is saying your Nuwisha characters *have* to die. It's your game, and the idea of being the last few Nuwisha left is inherently cool and tragic. Nuwisha who make alliances with the Garou are particularly likely to somehow survive until the Last Battleground.

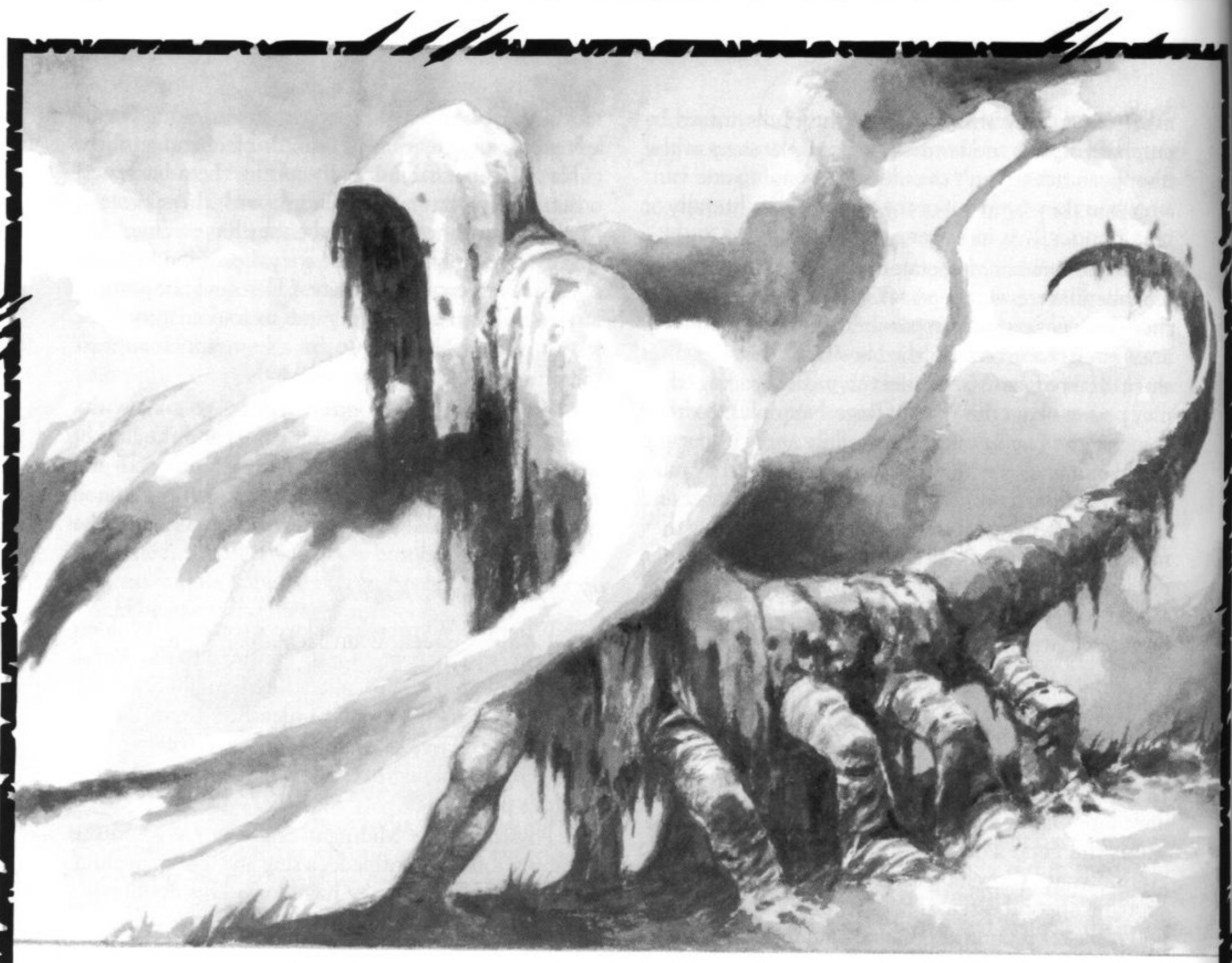
The Midnight Shadows

What the Wyrm released were some of the oldest Banes in existence, previously confined to the Abyss. These foul creatures are called the Midnight Shadows, and the Wyrm has finally unleashed them for the Apocalypse. They now represent a terrifying new enemy to the soldiers of Gaia, and a crucial part of the Wyrm's plans.

Physically, the Midnight Shadows are a hideous combination of a centipede, a slug and a human child, coated in darkness. They have long, chitinous bodies that trail out behind them like a tail, with many legs, but this body (and the rest of them) is covered in a coat of swirling darkness and shadow. Only the legs are visible. Any Garou slicing through this coat enough to peer beneath for a few seconds sees flesh very much like that of a human's, but white and pure. Their legs are short and stubby, but human. Toward the front of this body, the cloak slowly rises to accommodate a vertical torso and a hood that conceals the creature's face, which is only drawn back when it feeds. Any that observe one feeding sees the face of an infant, passive and sleepy.

Their weaponry is impressive and highly deceptive. They do not have claws, but their cloak of shadow can extend up to five feet from their bodies in any direction. Raking across their opponents, these tendrils leave gaping wounds. Despite appearing small and flat, their teeth are razor sharp and they strongly favor bite attacks. They are also prone to acts of frenzied bloodlust, often mutilating fallen foes after a battle, as well as devouring specific internal organs. Other displays of wanton cruelty and sadism are common.

However, what is most frightening about these creatures is not their martial prowess, but rather their unparalleled hunting abilities. The Midnight Shadows do not appear to share a strict hive mind. They act



independently of each other and appear to communicate in some way (though clearly not vocally, the Shadows make no sound) but they also act with a curious unity of purpose. Without direction, they understand their first duty is to kill every last Nuwisha alive, and they do so with stunning accuracy. Relying not upon conventional senses (except perhaps taste), they simply proceed towards their target, with no indication of how they know its location. This tracking sense is not perfect, however. They discover moving targets more easily than still ones. Tasting the blood of a target makes it notably easier for them. And the more unique the target, the harder it is for them to discover. Once they have tasted the blood of one Nuwisha, they discover finding the others has become much easier. Finding a specific Celestine might prove much more difficult.

Willpower 8, Rage 9, Gnosis 10. Essence 25

Charms: Airt Sense, Divine Prey, Materialize, Peek, Tracking, Wyrm's Mind

• **Divine Prey:** Surely their most feared ability, Midnight Shadows intuitively sense where their prey is even without ever having even seen or smelled it before. This prey can be defined as a single group rather than an individual, so long as the prey all share strong physical or social similarities. Naming "The Black Furies" or "the Garou" as prey is possible, as is "wolves" or "humanity," though the last might be rather pointless. "Shapeshifters" is too broad, however, since there is little similarity between the different Changing Breeds. Likewise, "Celestines" is too broad, although naming "Luna" works. When hunting a group, this charm finds the nearest example of that group.

To activate this power, the Shadow spends one Essence and rolls Gnosis against a difficulty of 10. This difficulty is reduced by one if the target is moving rapidly, and by one for every time the Shadow has tasted its prey's blood. When the Shadows were hunting the Nuwisha, the first Nuwisha they each hunted was at difficulty 10. But after one tasted Nuwisha blood, its next victim was only difficulty 9, and so on. With large groups, hunting soon becomes child's play.

To pinpoint prey requires five successes. Once a Shadow has located its prey may use the Tracking Charm to ensure an accurate chase. Four successes reveal a target's location within a very small area (such

as a room), three reveal a specific but general location (such as a city), and two a vague location such as a country. One success reveals only what world they are in, such as a specific Realm, the Penumbra or the material world. Note that while this makes early hunting somewhat unreliable, Midnight Shadows hunt in groups of ten, and once one of them finds a lead, they prove excellent trackers by conventional means as well, with acute senses.

• **Shared Purpose:** While the Midnight Shadows do not work as a hive mind (they each have individual personalities and perspectives) they do nonetheless act upon a shared purpose, seemingly conveyed to them by the Triatic Wyrms. If the Storyteller wishes to explore this idea, it is possible that there are in fact three factions of Midnight Shadows, one devoted to each part of the Triatic Wyrm. If this is the case, the three factions may not work together perfectly.

The Second Scion is Sacrificed: Zhyzhak, the Green Dragon's Chosen

While the Nuwisha were running for their lives and dying *en masse*, another massacre happens in a much more flamboyant and noticeable way. It is probably the first sign of the Apocalypse that humanity as a whole gets to see, though few can recognize it as such.

Late in 2003, Zhyzhak awakened with a nightmare in her head, carrying words of prophecy from the Beast of War directly. No one knows precisely what happened to her, but as she heard the words she was so shaken (or inspired) that she proceeded directly to gather her entire pack and tell them to follow her. One gave her trouble, and she butchered him on the spot. None of the others dared question her after this. Leaving the Hive she had resided in, she stole a semi-trailer truck and made her way east toward the small town of Temple Corner, Maine. There, Zhyzhak struck with frightening speed. She deliberately overturned the truck, blocking the main road in and out of the township. Her merciless onslaught began shortly thereafter. The small population of approximately seven hundred people was almost entirely trapped by the rocky hills surrounding the town. The Black Spiral Dancer ruthlessly tortured and slaughtered the population. Few resisted the Delirium, and those that did were completely unable to stop Zhyzhak.

During this chaos, several residents *did* attempt to make phone calls to 911. However, as these calls came in, 40 pounds of Nastrum Enterprises-produced C4 exploded at Emergency Response. Because of the positioning of the bombs, casualties were light, but operations were totally disrupted. Word of this attack got out, and the operator who took the call from Temple Corner duly noted what she'd been doing when the explosion happened. This news made its way into the superb network set up by Kleon Winston, the best intelligence expert the Glass Walkers have. Winston, in turn, sent a pattern spider through the phone network to Temple Corner and got back the news that Zhyzhak had trapped herself there. He quickly sent word to King Albrecht with just three words. "We have her." Albrecht knew immediately what Winston meant, and brought together three packs, including his own and Kleon Winston's, to finally wipe her from the face of the earth.

What they found was no more than they expected, but still horrifying. Zhyzhak had dragged every last citizen into Temple Corner's church, and piled the corpses on top of each other. There were barely ten people left alive when the packs reached Temple Corner, huddled among the corpses. Zhyzhak was nowhere to be seen. Evan Heals-the-Past waited for the other packs to try and secure the area before changing to Homid and trying to console the remaining victims. It was his last mistake. He was right beneath the wall Zhyzhak struck and collapsed into the church, killing the remaining residents and seriously wounding Evan.

Zhyzhak then stormed into battle, with green fire spewing from her mouth and agonizing venom glistening on her claws. Kleon Winston died early in the battle, and was not the only the first. But Zhyzhak, for all her power, was no match for three veteran packs of mighty Garou, and she was forced back. Fleeing to the rooftop, Albrecht pursued with two short bounds to the roof where she eviscerated him with her poisonous claws. He staggered back, but did not die. Instead, he launched himself at Zhyzhak and the two collapsed through the church roof, then Albrecht spent his last breaths drowning Zhyzhak in the blood of her victims.

Thus was a prophecy fulfilled. Zhyzhak crushed the last Gaian King under her heel. And thus did the perfect beast of war die in a river of blood. With her sacrifice, a second Red Star appeared in the Umbral sky.

Storytelling the Sacrifice of the Second Scion

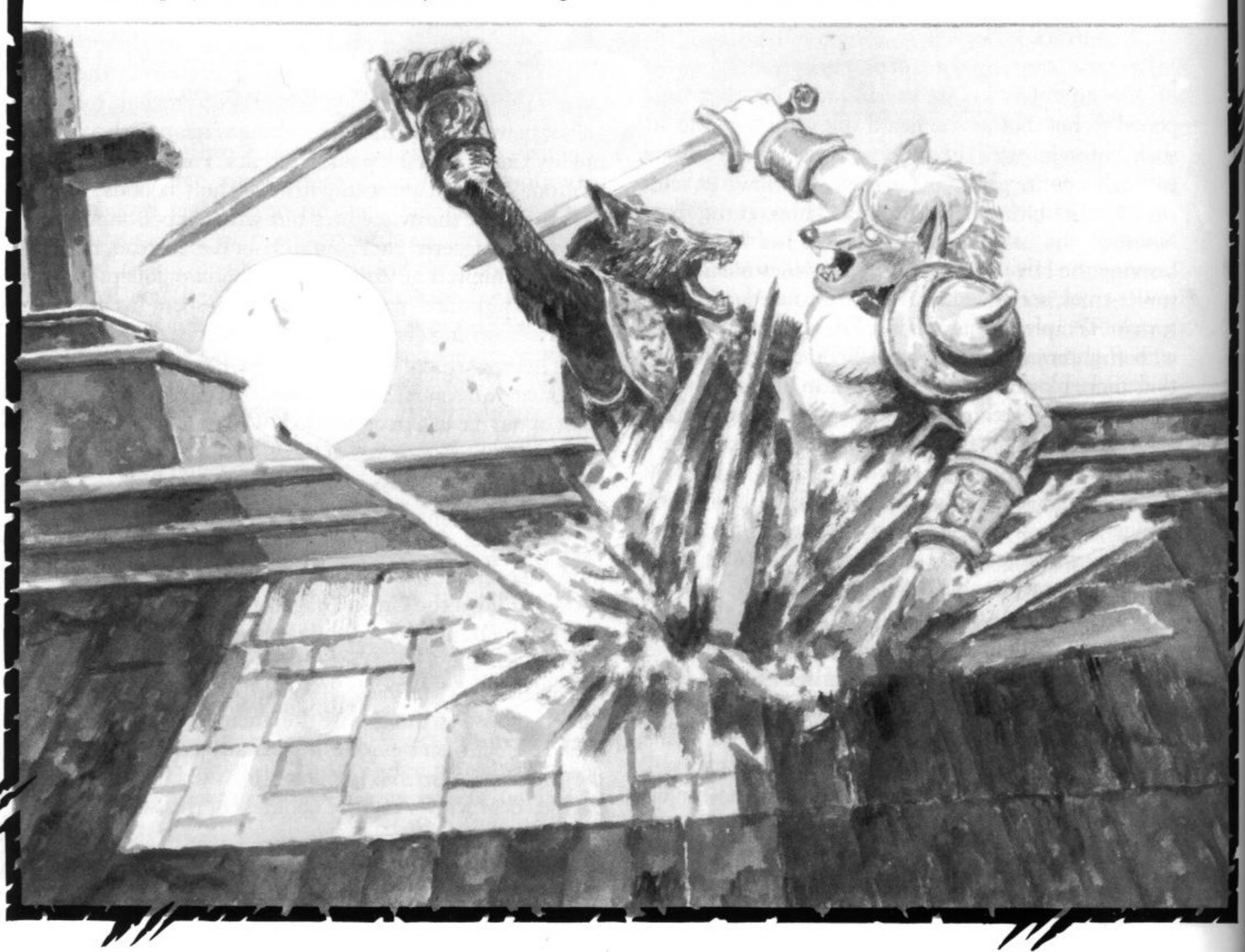
Zhyzhak didn't become the scion of the Beast of War with a pretty smile. She is, without question, the most frightening werewolf warrior on the planet, the chosen child of the Green Dragon. This raises a slight problem for most packs — she can simply destroy most Garou without pausing for breath. For some games, of course, this isn't a problem. If you do have a set of Rank 4 and 5 monsters, then revise the situation to allow for this. Albrecht isn't gutted, he's totally bisected and dies instantly. Zhyzhak then falls to the characters' pack to deal with. And the coolness of this scenario

doubles should one of the pack be a Silver Fang. Albrecht has to pass the Silver Crown onto someone, after all. This would place that character as one of the leaders of the Garou Nation in the Apocalypse, a situation filled with potential. (Granted, this also means the prophecy wasn't quite true, since Albrecht wasn't the last Gaian King. But don't worry about this; the prophet was a madman anyway.)

However, most packs quickly discover that Zhyzhak is out of their league. That's fine, every war needs its support troops in addition to heavy artillery, and the players have plenty to do.

To introduce the characters into the scenario, simply have them summoned by Albrecht while they're in New York. It doesn't really matter how powerful they are — Albrecht is simply scrambling troops for an opportunity that will probably not be repeated, speed is more important than power. (That third pack named above is, of course, that of the characters.) As the characters approach Temple Corner, play up the splatterpunk horror aspects — the blood can be smelt from miles away. Hint at the carnage before you ever lay it out for them, then slowly introduce it with the occasional mangled corpse on the street. Remember that the players don't know that Zhyzhak and her pack are in the church, so make them nervous about every street corner. Discuss the town in excruciating detail, worry the players sick about missing a potential clue.

Once they find the church, snap the trap shut around them. Zhyzhak collapses the wall in on Evan, and feel free to trap a few other characters as well. (You might suggest a Dexterity + Alertness roll at difficulty 8 to avoid being trapped.) All those underneath the bricks suffer three levels of lethal damage to begin with, and require help to get out, even in Crinos. (Zhyzhak can, of course, get out on her own.) Every turn spent under the bricks induces another level of lethal damage, so digging out the survivors is a crucial task, complicated by the rest of Zhyzhak's ambushing pack, who run into the church through the collapsed wall. Pack tactics are crucial to distracting and putting the enemy out of commission so the rest of their pack can be saved. Keep players well advised about what's happening, announce the damage to all pinned characters every turn and include Zhyzhak and Albrecht in initiative rolls. Make it feel like part of a whole battle. Finally, don't forget to give the end of the battle an appropriately grim conclusion. For all that the Garou might achieve here, the King has just died. Let them all mourn on this dark day.



Last of all, for a very different one-shot, consider using Kinfolk. Consider the situation: You're trapped in an isolated town while a group of monsters slowly hunt down and start killing all the townspeople. It's a perfect set up for a tongue-in-cheek nod to the classic horror film. The Kinfolk know that the cavalry is coming, and they need to survive only a few hours, but those hours are the most frightening of their lives. Hiding, running, and shotguns full of cut-up silver jewelry are the order of the day.

Signs and Portents

As the mostly isolated major events of the Apocalypse build up, some less important but far more obvious events begin to occur. The end times are here, and all who knew that they would come can see the signs.

The second Red Star sends shockwaves throughout Garou and human communities. The Garou cannot miss the power of the two Stars, whose combined power breaks into the Penumbra in an unholy nimbus, tinting the entire Penumbra blood red. A feeling of queasy horror sets into the stomachs of those most attuned to Gaia, and few doubt any longer that the Stars are of the Wyrm. Among humans, however, the simple appearance of what appears to be a single Red Star in the night sky provokes more curiosity than panic. The media settles upon an ironically accurate name, the "Star of Mars" and astronomers soon discover that it is in fact a twin star. However, they also discover something else, something very worthy of causing panic. The Red Star can be seen from every telescope on the planet, regardless of its geographical location. This scientific impossibility alarm all who know about it, but again, the atmosphere is curious, even excited about the discovery. After all, the phrase that often precedes scientific discovery is not "Eureka!" but "That's strange...."

The Vatican likewise acknowledges the Star as a new sign from God, and only a few churches are worried. Some extremist Muslim groups claim it is the fire of Allah coming to judge arrogant America. No major religious body declares that Armageddon has come. But among individuals, the signs speak differently. The suicide rate triples in *every* single country that counts them. Murder cases skyrocket, and in many cases the victims are the murderers' own children, or parents. Few of these murders seem committed out of anger, but more often out of sorrow.

Among the Garou, the death of King Albrecht panics many. Love or hate the Fangs, Albrecht was a shining star among the tribe and a symbol of hope to many throughout all tribes. Many werewolves view his death as a signifier of all of their deaths. After all, if Albrecht couldn't survive, who among them could? But surprisingly, the Garou handle the death of their King far better than many would expect, as another strong leader quickly and decisively takes the reins of the Nation — Margrave Konietzko. As soon as he gets the word, he begins calling in his markers among the tribes. Within a week, Elizabeth Genereader of the Glass Walkers and Kelonoke Wildhair of the Black Furies pledge their support within a day of being asked, and both begin rallying their tribemates with vigor. Genereader, in particular, is highly successful.

They also begin petitioning other tribes, and soon many packs of other tribes acknowledge the Margrave as the leader of the Garou Nation. The Red Talons quickly agree, spreading out from an already existing alliance in Finland. Elizabeth Genereader, with her soft and intelligent words, smoothes over the divisions between the Glass Walkers and Bone Gnawers to get many packs on her side, and those packs begin converting other packs. Wildhair succeeds in bringing the Children of Gaia on board. The Fianna prove stubborn; Ard Righ Bron Mac Fionn refuses to even acknowledge the King's death and directly insults the Margrave, describing him as a "back-stabbing cur, who will forever sit outside the glorious gates of Arcadia after the Garou sweep back the Wyrm once and for all." However, he is soon killed in a Bane ambush,

Just in Case It Wasn't Obvious...

Bron Mac Fionn did not die by accident. Once it became clear he would not back the Margrave, Konietzko gave quiet orders to a Fianna named Robert McNabb via Nada, a Shadow Lord. The two formulated a plan to assassinate the Ard Righ. Nada was given a fetish that lured Banes to it in droves. Tracking the Ard Righ, she activated it and a second later McNabb put a silver bullet in Mac Fionn's skull. In the chaos and confusion, they stole the body and gouged the bullet from his brain before fleeing. The Wyrm was blamed, and interference was never suspected.

Ultimately, they both concluded the attack was justified. Bron Mac Fionn was a fae-addled lunatic who was dragging the tribe into the mire, and the time had come for the Garou to stand as one. But this is the weak point in the Margrave's new alliance: Should the truth come out, the whole house of cards may come tumbling down. To help ensure this never happens, Son-of-Moonlight has never been told the truth of what happened.

Creative Storytellers might, of course, have the Margrave assign this duty to other loyal Garou, such as the players' pack....

putting Son-of-Moonlight in the position of Ard Righ. He immediately declares that the Fianna will fight to the last for the Margrave. Among the European tribes, only the Get of Fenris and Silver Fangs remain mostly opposed to Konietzko. It doesn't matter. With his powerful bloc assembled (including a strong percentage of American Glass Walkers) he has the numbers needed to rule by sheer momentum. He successfully assures that the Garou will fight as a unified force in the end times, and not be picked off one pack at a time.

A few Umbral Realms began to change. Wolfhome became prone to strange 'glitches,' as Glass Walker Pat Reidy described it. Some, but not all, Garou who went there remained Garou, rather than becoming wolves. Others maintained their Garou mind but were forced to maintain Lupus form the entire time. All attempting to enter the Legendary Ream found the way barred by massive iron gates. More than a few Garou claimed to have noticed increased activity in Malfeas and a massive increase in the number of Banes visiting the Atrocity Realm.

One last sign hinted at what was to come. Thirteen miles from a major caern, a group of Banes cleared all spirits from a wide area. Into this area they dragged hundreds of bodies — the bodies of the Nuwisha. There, these bodies were torn apart and constructed into Five Columns of Flesh, each three feet wide and ten feet high, save one, that stood fifteen feet high. Above two a black cloud gathered.

The Third Scion is Sacrificed: The Perfect Metis

By this point, the Garou Nation was well and truly spooked. Before the blood had dried on Zhyzhak's claws, the news of King Albrecht's death had begun to spread as chattering spirits whispered of the horrid deed. Listening Theurges heard their words and told their septs. The packs in the septs told other packs, and those other packs told their septs. And when Winston's pack returned, one posted the news to GWnet, so a whole tribe knew. Within days, the entire Nation knew. And even if some didn't, all could look to the Umbral sky and see those two red stars, both now plainly visible from the Penumbra.

And in one small sept, the so-called Perfect Metis just went through the First Change. And it wasn't pretty, even as First Changes go. For weeks before the Change, the cub had begun to try and escape the sept, and most of the time hardly even seemed to know the reason for the attempts. (Some of the sept worried that this indicated a mental defect. In some ways, they were right.) After yet another escape attempt, one of the cub's guardians went out in pursuit, and the Perfect Metis suddenly shifted to Lupus form and attacked — his First Change became a frenzy, caught in the Thrall of the Wyrm. By the time other sept members managed a rescue, the minder had been castrated. It was an inauspicious beginning to say the least. Many members of the sept considered this proof that the "Perfect Metis" was indeed of the Wyrm and should be killed.

Unfortunately for them, they never got the chance. Soon after the First Change, the sept fell under relentless attack by packs emerging from the Hive of the Broken Star with the intent of capturing the Perfect Metis. What surprised all concerned, however, was that the Perfect Metis actively worked against the sept to be captured. Guards were attacked, wardens snuck past. Nothing stopped the obsessive, even fanatical desire to escape. And eventually it succeeded.

Once captured, the Perfect Metis is taken via moon bridge to a Hive to meet a dark fate. The cub does not die for over three weeks and in that time is subjected to every torture and horror the Black Spiral Dancers (and the many Banes summoned to assist) can imagine. All that is left is a twisted and agonized, bloodied and stained, defiled corpse.

With this sacrifice, the anchors are in place. No known force save that of utter destruction can now force the united Triatic Wyrm out of the Near Umbra. The Wyrm roars into being in the Aetherial Realm as the two Red Stars blink once, and then the eyes of the Wyrm are joined by its body. Its body is long and unscaled, not leathery but still oily and slick, as if black blood poured from every pore. Small pieces of flesh, dust and ash fall from its stomach and the stench of internal organs fills the air. It is decay, death, oblivion and the end of worlds.

The universe notices. The planets shake in fear at his presence, and he defies all defenses they might erect. Only Rorg, Incarna of the Asteroid Belt, summons the courage to face him, grins, and hurls his arrows. They bounce off the Wyrm's hide. The Wyrm silently and gleefully breathes a plume of Balefire through the Realm of the Asteroids and blood fills the Heavens. Some nations see a massive green vortex light up the night sky, and then see a red nebula slowly fade away. Rorg's eyes are burned from his face, and he is blinded. Three chunks of Rorg's flesh fall from his bloodied body and collapse into Earth, creating panic and confusion. Dust plumes from the craters they make, and in time it is this dust that will be blamed by scientists for the death to follow. But the real reason for the decline of the planet begins a second later, as the Wyrm burns with Balefire and flies through the Realm of Eshtarra, the avatar of Gaia and Aetherial force of Earth. The Wyrm screams, scorching, cutting and

Dead Before Arrival

The scenario *Anthelios Raging* was deliberately left as open-ended as possible, in order to allow the players the maximum possible importance they could assume in the story. One possible outcome was the infant death of the Perfect Metis, either at their own claws or because of the failure of their protection. Naturally, this complicates matters somewhat.

One possibility you have is to simply play it as it goes, using the logic that by their actions, the Apocalypse is already limping out of the gate. The Wyrm makes a desperate attempt, reaching into the Near Umbra despite not being anchored, and the Garou have their chance to end the Apocalypse. This option rewards the players for their wise decision in an earlier game, but it still doesn't lead to a totally happy story — the fallout still leaves one tribe forever destroyed, and massive casualties among the Garou, humans and animals alike. Yet it doesn't lend itself to the sort of desperate, ferocious action that an Apocalypse chronicle should engender. The Wyrm is hamstrung to begin with, and it's merely up to the Garou to see if they have the *cajonés* to finish it.

A second option is to instead find a replacement for the Perfect Metis. And oddly, the next best choice for the Defiler's sacrifice is Pentex. Remember that the sacrifice must embody the Defiler both in its life and death. Pentex has most certainly lived its life for the Defiler. In addition, the sheer horror of what a Defiler's sacrifice of an entire company and all its employees would entail should be enough to make even a veteran **Werewolf** player squirm. Pentex employs millions worldwide, and at least the vast majority of them would have to face violent, tortured, depraved deaths.

In fact, the major problem the Defiler Wyrm may have is the scale of the operation, which would dwarf the Week of Nightmares in its audacity. But if you consider how many fomori Pentex can generate, how many Black Spiral Dancers could be brought out for the purpose, and the possibility of turning the Midnight Shadows upon Pentex, then it quickly becomes obvious that the Defiler Wyrm *could* commit such an act. The fallout would, of course, color the rest of the world's history. The Veil would surely be shattered. It would become obvious that monsters are real. But why should the Wyrm care? With this victory, it cannot be stopped from its conquest of the Near Umbra. The physical world and the whole of humanity are suddenly irrelevant. Including, in fact, Pentex.

Finally, there exists one more path. What if the sacrifices are slightly more mutable than first thought? Instead of sacrificing the Perfect Metis, it turns out that sacrificing the murderer of the Perfect Metis will work equally well, putting the Garou (such as the characters) who killed the cub into position of targets. The Midnight Shadows have completed their purge of the Nuwisha and await new orders. And so while the characters did do the right thing by eliminating the cub, now they have their most desperate, and most important, quest ever.

torturing her body. Sokhta, who is the moon in the Heavens, is left conspicuously unharmed.

And with that, the Wyrm descends into the Penumbra and waits at the Last Battleground. The Apocalypse begins.

Storytelling the Sacrifice of the Third Scion

Balancing the story of the Third Scion are two absolute opposites: innocence and corruption. The themes of corruption are obvious: From birth, the Wyrm has owned the cub's soul, which in death is butchered and abused beyond possible comprehension. The story should be perverse and horrible. Give the Hive of the Broken Star twisted personalities and make them as dislikable as possible. Also give them some brains and twisted logic. ("The Metis is evil, you know it. But you don't want to kill it, we understand. Give it to us, and we will. Don't trust us? We'll let you watch. Participate even if you like.") But don't forget the other side of this as well: Trapped in the middle of this story is a small child. A metis, yes, raised in a strange warrior culture, both despised and cautiously revered, tremendously messed up. But a child nonetheless, pre-pubescent, insecure, probably painfully shy, threatened by the world and by urges even other Garou can't understand. And genuinely innocent. Give the Perfect Metis humanity and sympathy. The villains are the Hive, not the Metis.

The sort of story this scenario presents probably depends upon a single choice the players make. Throw them into the sept when the Hive begins its attack and holds the sept under siege. Their forces are overwhelming and the guardians of the sept unprepared. Desperately, they beg the characters to stay and help them defend the caern, for without their help it will surely be razed and destroyed. Thus the players must make a difficulty decision: Do they stay behind and try to defend the caern, adhering to the Litany in a time when surely every last caern counts even more than before, but risking the loss of the escape-driven metis?

Or do they instead judge that the time has come when other priorities are even higher than caerns, and try to smuggle the kid out before the Hive can?

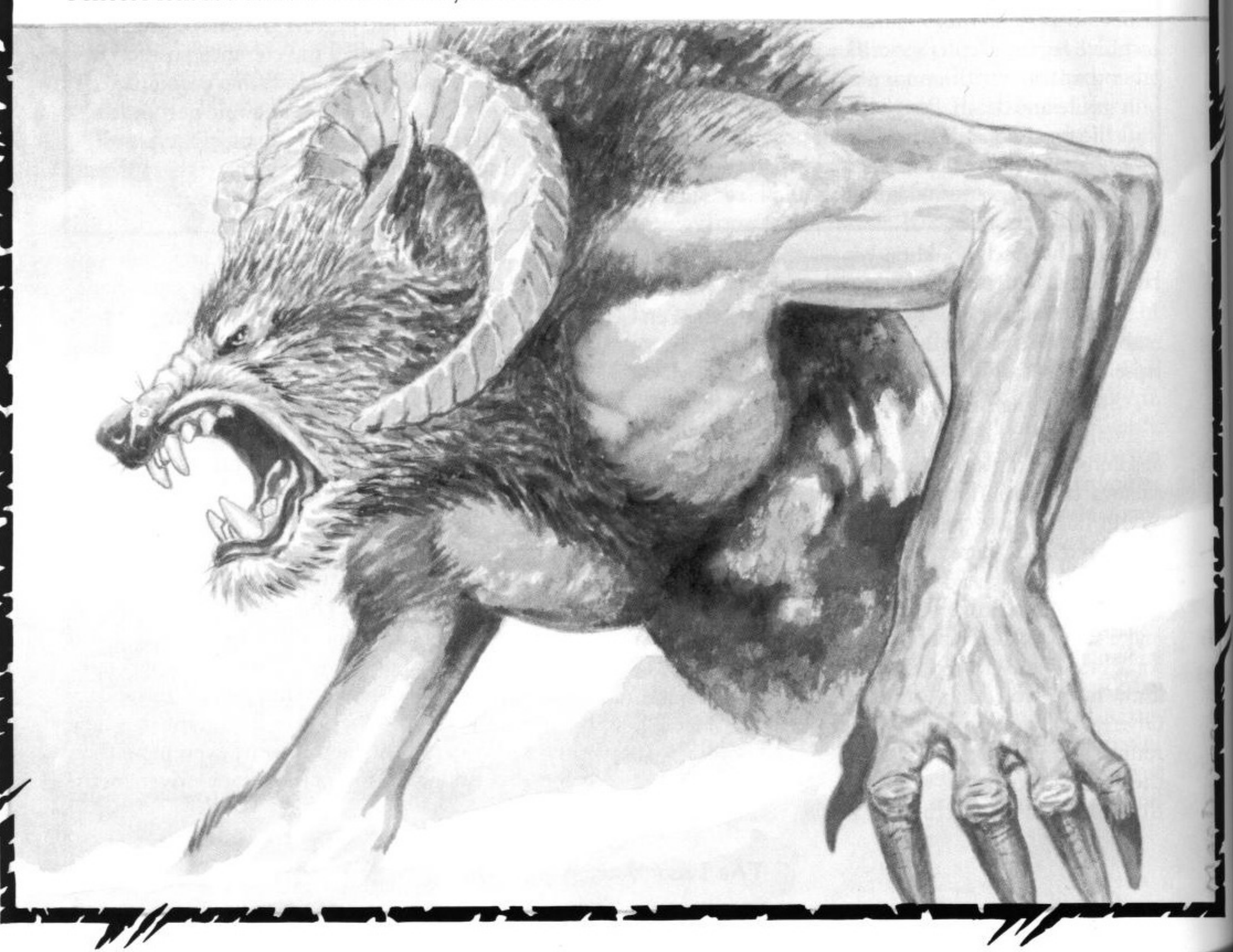
Should they decide to stay behind, the game becomes a classic siege situation. The storyline can be handled episodically, with each game session representing a new assault on the caern. Players will also need to handle other duties such as hunting food (which during a siege is a particularly risky proposition) and trying to make strikes back at the enemy. Give the players plenty of opportunity to invent strategies. Not only does this let them keep a sense of control in the game, but it will give you story ideas. Finally, keep the twist alive with the Perfect Metis attempting to escape every so often, but not too often. See if you can give your players a heart attack when they find out.

However, should they decide to get out of there with the cub, then the game becomes a bizarre blend of road trip, character study and war story. As they high tail it out of the area, the Hive is in fast pursuit. If you really want to make it interesting, don't pass up the chance to introduce a Midnight Shadow or two. Pepper the story with attacks, but give the story the chance to calm down as well. Play up the innocence of the Perfect Metis as a confused and basically nice kid who ultimately isn't evil by choice but guided to evil by destiny. But test the players as well — give the cub Willpower rolls to try and resist the urge to surrender, or even attack his protectors now and then. If he fails, let the players watch in horror as the Metis simply wanders blindly toward them. Above all, let the players bond and even begin to like the kid. It'll be all the more horrible when the Hive finally makes the capture. After all, the characters can't run forever.

The Umbra in Chaos

With the Wyrm's entry into the Near Umbra, the spirits are in a panic. Nobody in the Garou Nation nor among the spirits is in any doubt that the end times are now here, and an "every man for himself" mood descends upon the vast majority of the spirits. Nor is this mood undeserved, as hordes of Banes flood the Penumbra and slaughter everything in their paths.

In the end times, the Umbra — all of it — becomes a war zone. Whereas previously the likelihood of a Bane ambush was a constant danger in the Umbra, now it is a certainty. There is nearly always a Bane somewhere in sight, and frequently there is a rush of them. (Usually coming immediately right toward you.)



The Five Columns

At the heart of the enemy strategy are the Five Columns of Flesh. Taking from the dead souls of the Nuwisha the knowledge of almost every square inch of the Umbra, each column links a Near Realm to the Penumbra. A firmer link than a moon bridge, these columns allow the Triatic Wyrms to marshal their troops together, bringing forth untold numbers of Banes from the furthest reaches of the Umbra. The first column is linked to Malfeas, and this is the second most important column to all three of the enemy. From here, the largest host of Banes comes, as well as the most powerful.

The second column links to Scar. Not only do many Banes likewise flood the Penumbra from this Realm, but many also come armed, with foul blades made from waste and built in that Realm's factories.

The third links to the Atrocity Realm. Few Banes come from this column, but the third column soon becomes a symbol of fear among Gaia's warriors. It is the last thing that any prisoners taken see from the Penumbra.

The fourth column provides a gateway to the Abyss, and stands still. That this is true terrifies those who think about it too much. The very Wyrm itself, *the* force of death and destruction, has brought himself into the battle. What possible force is he expecting to emerge from the Abyss and enter the battlefield?

These four columns form a square, and in the middle is the fifth and most important column. This one, taller than the others, links to Battleground. But rather than merely providing a doorway in and out of the Realm, this column acts as a focus to Battleground, or specifically one particular part of Battleground — the Plain of the Apocalypse. The Five Columns stand at one end, and the Wyrm flies above them in wait. Surrounding the Plain the Warring Hordes lie in wait, unusually quiet and passive, as if expectant. No noise is heard here — an eerie, pregnant silence blankets the area. And one end of the Plain remains open, waiting for the soldiers of Gaia.

Magic in the End Times

While the Garou fight for their lives and rage against the destroyer of all things, they despair (or are disdainfully unimpressed) to see that the majority of mages simply don't even notice the Apocalypse happening all around them. Though few Garou possibly understand this (and thus see the mages as hopelessly lazy and in denial) the reason for this has to do with their understanding of the world. Those among them that even acknowledge the existence of the spirit world see it as utterly divided from the physical world. The mystical forces that affect the spirit do not affect matter, and vice versa. The idea that the Umbra is the source of the mysterious troubles the physical world suffers is incompatible with the worldview many mages hold.

In addition, they're also a little distracted. As the flood of Banes entering the Penumbra attack the Pattern Web, the bonds of reality loosen somewhat. Magic backlashes become rarer and the abilities of mages become notably more powerful. And some, particularly those from tribal societies, do note the signs of the Apocalypse and ally with individual Garou.

This is why, of course, the Wyrm immediately begins targeting mages for possession. Not only can they become powerful thorns in the sides of the Garou just when they need it least, but they also cause the Garou to distrust mages *en masse*, and turn away a potential ally.

Spirit Refugees

Spirits in the Penumbra fare particularly poorly as the Apocalypse begins. The most numerous and obvious travelers of the Umbra, they are not only assaulted by the hordes of Banes that now flood the velvet shadow, but also by a large number of the Midnight Shadows instructed specifically to brutalize any nature, Weaver or Wyld spirit that they can find. This is a strategy designed to force the Garou into a direct conflict. However, the strategy at least partly backfired. Not only did it give the Garou a reason to enter the Last Battleground, but it also gave them a reason to guard the caerns and stay the hell away. Many spirits, seeing the potential protection the Garou could offer them, flooded toward caerns and attempted to run right past the guards and seek sanctuary. (And, especially very early on, they tended to succeed for at least a while.)

The move caught most septs well and truly off guard. Having a strong spirit presence in a caern wasn't something most resented. After all, good Theurges could encourage spirits to help in caern defense, and there was never really a good reason to waste resources keeping generally benign spirits out when it took all the effort they could muster to keep out the malign ones. But with the Apocalypse brought to a head, assumptions began to change.

Spirits require Gnosis simply to exist, drawing it from the world around them as material creatures eat the food the world produces. While they are in caerns they draw off the energies of the caern itself. For the few dozens that most caerns normally house, this doesn't warrant mention. With a few hundred spirits, if not a few *thousand* in the largest caerns, this is a tremendous concern. The caern's totem spirit can

The Logic Behind the Battlefield

Why should the Garou deliberately walk into what is obviously a suicidal battle, to fight the very Wyrm itself? And for that matter, why should the Wyrm go to such trouble to create one, creating the circumstances to fulfill Garou prophecy?

For the Wyrm, the first question answers the second. While incredibly powerful, the Wyrm cannot simultaneously affect the entire world while he is located within it. To be as effective as possible, he needs the Garou to be immediately present so his awesome destructive capacity can best be used in a huge battle where he can kill the most Garou in one swoop. Once the Garou are dead, his Banes can simply walk over the Earth with little, if any, resistance.

The Garou, however, realize they have no choice in the matter. If they stay and guard their individual caerns rather than come out and settle the war as soon as possible, then they may survive longer, but only by allowing the death of almost every spirit in existence, allowing the world to crumble and die around them, leaving nothing but grey ash and dust. The caerns simply cannot shelter all the spirits seeking refuge within. They might resist initially, but not for long after that, and it would be only a matter of time before they are overwhelmed one caern at time. To have any chance of keeping the world alive, they must stand together and face down death.

easily become drained and the caern's Gauntlet becomes thicker. Nor are the spirits overly picky, and the appearance of Weaver spirits in wilderness caerns raises a lot of tension and anger.

In addition and of most worry, the Midnight Shadows quickly took advantage of the situation. They were charged with hunting down these same spirits taking refuge, and the massive collection of them makes the caern a particularly tempting target. Many septs debate whether the defensive value of more spirits is worth it if they bring down an even greater enemy to face you.

But weighed against this is a simple moral dilemma: If you turn the spirits away, they will surely be slaughtered. Are you prepared to doom them?

The Thirteen Realms

The Abyss

One of the many things that the Apocalypse proved, should any Garou take the time to consider it in the final frantic days, is that the Abyss was *not* the Wyrm. The Wyrm didn't come from the Abyss but instead from the Aetherial Realm, and before there he seemed to exist somewhere *else*, somewhere in the Deep Umbra. And yet, if Malfeas was the heart of the Wyrm, then the Abyss was his soul. Why, some Garou may ask, did it exist? What was its purpose?

One Garou knew. Its name is Nightmaster. As a Shadow Lord hero and great warrior, he went into the Abyss with his pack to learn the secrets of this Realm. And eventually, he looked into the Abyss and found them, but only after killing every member of his own pack as they went insane in the Realm's deepest recesses. And now, he is still Nightmaster.

But he is no longer Garou. As the time went by, he was warped by the permeating influence of the Wyrm, first in mind, and then in body. These first horrendous steps were his own — he deliberately severed one of his own arms and stared in its direction in total darkness for nine years in contemplation, achieving a foul enlightenment in the process. And with his mind now accepting, he let the Wyrm give him a new, better body. And, with the Apocalypse come, he has now left his place of rest. He marked his return by butchering a pack of Shadow Lords, the tribe that was once his.

In the Abyss and involving Nightmaster, a few story ideas could include:

- The Nightmaster, insane as he is, *knows* the Wyrm. In his time spent in the Abyss he listened to the closest whispers of the Wyrm and learned his secrets. He is thus a perfect subject for capture and interrogation. Capturing him, of course, is worthy of a legend in itself, and the issue of how you manage to break a Wyrm-warped maniac is also filled with questions.

Big Scenarios vs. Small Scenarios

As an Apocalypse contained within the Umbra, it makes sense to involve the Near Realms heavily, and players may want to try to visit them before the Last Battle. However, going to all thirteen Realms and seeing world-changing possibility after world-changing possibility is likely to strain credibility, not to mention become a little repetitive!

In order to combat this possibility, each Realm has a number of possible scenarios. One of these is the genuine world-changer, a massive plot hammer for either good or bad to bring screaming into your Apocalypse chronicle. The others are smaller, more personal scenarios that can be used to add flavor and texture. Choose two or three of the world changers and make them true for your chronicle, and settle upon one of the smaller scenarios for the rest.

(Although, he does feel pain. Torture could work.) Assuming it can be done, the Garou would gain a wealth of information. The entire plot revolving around the three scions would be explained perfectly, as well as the role of the Five Columns of Flesh. They would be told the truth of the Midnight Shadows and learn how they work and think. They might also learn a weakness of the Wyrm. For example: The Wyrm is now

Using the Nightmaster

The Nightmaster is intended as a recurring villain in Last Battleground chronicle, a way for the Storyteller to keep a common enemy that is slightly more personal than the all-conquering, utterly alien Wyrm. While the Nightmaster is still very much an alien creature, one of the Wyrm's closest lieutenants, he was nonetheless once Garou and can still think like one. He can talk, is entirely lucid despite being completely insane, and can still do things like speak in the Garou tongue. While his overall goals are not very complex (Aid the Wyrm toward destroying Gaia, kill everything he can lay his claws on, destroy Helios personally) he can nonetheless be very cunning, can think to offer the pack a devil's deal in a "temporary alliance," and can also develop personal relationships. Don't be afraid to pull out every last horrible stop with the Nightmaster — take every ugly violent, perverse urge you can think of and let him show it. His new five forms are also, of course, designed for repeat encounters — vary the way he attacks the characters' pack and let them try to think their way out of it each time.

Depending on the players' choices during the chronicle, the pack might first meet him inside the Abyss itself, or immediately upon his escape. (Perhaps they even witness his butchering of a Shadow Lord pack.) He can also move through any of the Near Realms — they might encounter him there, as well — and can also still step sideways. Like Garou, he remains both flesh and spirit.

Finally, in a more politically oriented Last Battleground game, the Nightmaster can act as the anti-Konietzko. While the Margrave shows that genuine devotion can make use highly unethical and dishonorable acts, the Nightmaster shows how deadly a fascination with the dark side can be. If the players start to follow the Margrave's lead and take a few "deals with the devil" (such as the one offered in the CyberRealm, see page 55) then you can use the Nightmaster to demonstrate the risks of flirting with the enemy.

so powerful that only his own workings can harm him. Were he pushed down onto the Five Columns, they would piece his belly and weaken him tremendously, making him vulnerable to other massive attacks.

• The Midnight Shadows came from the Abyss. Therefore, into the valley of darkness the players must go in order to find where they came from and ensure their destruction. The game becomes a battle of willpower and wits. Storytellers can have fun by screwing around with hallucinations. The characters individually begin to see things, and some of them are not real. As they get deeper and deeper into the Abyss and the Midnight Shadows' home, test Willpower repeatedly to avoid going mad. But should they find their way into the darkest corners of the Abyss, they find a set of cocoons. Half are broken, half are still full. It is from these cocoons that the Midnight Shadows hatch. Don't be afraid to surprise your players by having all the remaining cocoons break open if they attack one.

The Aetherial Realm

As the word begins to spread throughout the Garou Nation of the Last Battleground and the silent challenge it offers to every werewolf in the world and beyond, individual packs begin their pilgrimages. And among such a widespread group, they take the quickest paths to the Last Battleground: moon bridges.

Every single moon bridge passes through the Aetherial Realm. And this makes the Realm a very tempting target indeed for the Wyrm, who has successfully scattered most of the planetary guardians and destroyed much of its natural defenses simply by his dramatic appearance there. In one fell swoop, he grievously injured Rorg, and almost certainly murdered Eshtarra. The spirits in the Aetherial Realm panic and give the Wyrm a wide berth, allowing means and opportunity for his Banes to lay in wait and make strategic attacks on the planetary Incarnae and moon bridges.

But not every planet is impassive or scared as their end draws near. Some of the Incarnae actively opposing the Wyrm, or otherwise involved, are detailed below. Others may also get involved as the Storyteller sees fit.

• Is Eshtarra really dead? As with anything else, that depends upon the Storyteller. While *The Last Battleground* assumes that she is the first casualty of the Apocalypse, she might also be merely horribly wounded, perhaps mortally so. There could certainly be a lot of valuable symbolism in keeping her barely alive, much like Earth. The players can literally talk to the ailing world, seeing her cough up blood from her wounds and the color drain from her face. Creative Storytellers could even create small mythologies to explain the connection between Gaia, Eshtarra and Earth — Eshtarra acting as conduit between Gaia and the planet for example — and draw ramifications from her death that affect the Apocalypse while not immediately dooming the world and giving the players something to do.

• Rorg is the most violently aggressive Incarna present, but he is also heavily wounded and blinded, after the Wyrm attacked him briefly in his explosion into the Aetherial Realm. He has been waiting for the Apocalypse ever since the destruction of his planet, and to be incapacitated this close to his chance to deliver the Wyrm his death blow may drive him a little bit mad. This is, needless to say, a major problem. However, it is also a major opportunity for the Garou. Thus blinded, the Wyrm has disregarded Rorg to focus on more important targets. This opens the possibility of a pack of Garou navigating the hazards of the Asteroid Realm (including the many smaller asteroid-spirits who are not blinded and very capable of waging war on any intruders, and in these times just about anyone is likely to be seen as an intruder) and attempting to win the trust of the Asteroid god. Doing so will not be an easy task. Not only are the aforementioned hazards very real indeed, but Rorg is already distrustful and bitter, and he can't see his would-be allies, making his trust even harder to earn. But it can be done.

First of all, Rorg is favorably disposed to the Red Talon tribe, and he can still sense the presence of one of their number by touch. Should one be with the pack and announce herself, Rorg asks her to step forward and touches the patch of red fur on her body. Once this is confirmed, he is much more receptive, although he may not be swung over to their side immediately. Offerings may also help, but remember that Rorg is a god of war. Offering up a Gaian fetish could possibly invoke greater suspicion than friendship, depending on the fetish's purpose. (Weaponry, of course, is gladly accepted.) By contrast, offering up the heads of a Black Spiral Dancer pack likely engenders friendship. Things that Rorg can verified by touch are better than those requiring sight.

In the end, though, it comes down to oratory and persuasion. The pack needs to convince Rorg of their loyalty to Gaia, their reverence for him and desire to help him crush the Wyrm (and *not* the other way around — they are to serve him, and must remember this) in order to earn his trust. This can be treated as an Expression + Leadership roll at difficulty 9. Being a Red Talon or bringing appropriate gifts may also reduce this difficulty.

If this trust is earned, then the pack can assist Rorg in aiming asteroid strikes against specific locations, even onto the Last Battleground. Rorg is surprisingly precise, landing tiny asteroid strikes as well as genuine

world-enders. However, explaining aim to a blind god is not an easy task, especially not when having to judge that aim through Umbral Realms as well. To accurately aim an asteroid strike, Rorg's aide must roll Intelligence + Expression, but can achieve no more successes than he has dots in Enigmas. Hitting a particular person is difficulty 10, hitting a large formation (such as a horde of Banes or a few packs of Black Spiral Dancers) is difficulty 8. Fortunately for the Garou, one of the best targets is also one of the easiest — hitting the Five Columns is merely difficulty 6. The trick is getting past the Triatic Wyrms, who currently hover above the Five Columns and therefore protect them. Every success on this roll does ten dice of unsoakable aggravated damage to any creatures in the immediate vicinity of the strike, but a botch causes twenty levels of unsoakable aggravated damage to a friendly group nearby. Note also that the Wyrm has previously proven that he can resist Rorg's arrows, so they do no damage to him.

• Ruatma, the Incarna of Uranus, is not actively opposing the Wyrm. But knowledgeable and clever Garou may develop a strong suspicion of this planetary Incarna and investigate. He held secret prophecies about the Perfect Metis who would eventually become a "Shadow Queen," and her eventual fate as the sacrifice that brought the Wyrm into the Aetherial Realm may well be the fulfillment of that prophecy. Even more damningly, the appearance of the Midnight Shadows has cast further suspicion on the self-proclaimed Lord of Shadows — even their appearance as hooded creatures of shadow bears similarity.

What is ironic about this is that Ruatma is genuinely innocent. He had no assurances either that the Metis would be a thorn in Gaia's side or Her savior, and merely wished to possess the power it would have in order to boost his own importance. Nor does he have anything to do with Midnight Shadows, who belong part and parcel to the Wyrm. However, these are desperate times, and a clever Garou might well be able to *bring* Ruatma into the war, especially if she knows that Ruatma withheld his prophecies from everyone else. This does not, after all, speak well of him, and the similarity of the Midnight Shadows is remarkable....

Without knowing about the hidden prophecy, it is impossible for any Garou to intimidate Ruatma. After all, dealing with him would take a massive force, and it's unlikely any Garou would ever want to try, least of all *now*. But then, these *are* desperate times, the Garou are awfully unpredictable and it's not as if there isn't an overwhelming moral reason to directly intervene, even though it's the sort of thing Ruatma is loathe to do, being used to literally millennia of subtle, unseen

manipulation. Assuming that the pack somehow has knowledge of the hidden prophecy (a difficult thing to discover in itself) then an extended Manipulation + Subterfuge roll (Difficulty 9) resulting in five successes brings his assistance into the Last Battleground. Of course, a botch could be truly disastrous.

• Sokhta, the Aetherial representative of the Moon (though a spirit distinct from Luna, who exists in the Deep Umbra), is likewise not yet directly involved, except in that she's keeping all moon bridges active and safe to help facilitate the Garou. She's a peaceful spirit at heart, with few warlike inclinations or abilities. (It is Luna, after all, who caresses Rage with her touch, not Sokhta.) This is, of course, exactly the reason she's a perfect target for attack, preferably while the maximum number of Garou are *on* those moon bridges. Why else would the Wyrm leave her unharmed in his initial rushing attack?

Arcadia Gateway

Arcadia is dying. At its best it was a lie, a glorious lie but still a lie — a Realm of half-real fairies and fantasies playing with each other and those Garou who would step into their lair. But now as the world dies not even nightmares find power in the minds of the living, and the magic of the world is dying as Gaia does. The power of the Arcadia Gateway, rooted in fantasy and fancy, is evaporating like perfume on a breeze, and leaving only a collection of moldy props behind.

It doesn't happen instantly. Indeed, it happens painfully slowly and the Realm is still continuing to collapse even after the Last Battle. Slowly but surely, though, the lie becomes clear. The fae stop wielding the power they had come to expect, and massive trolls that before would have simply eaten even the mightiest Crinos now simply cannot find the strength to resist their claws. Sirens possess only a very pretty song that one remembers a little while later walking down the road. As time goes on, the Realm's slow death becomes increasingly obvious to all. The ground starts to feel rubbery, the grass plastic. Heroes' Divine Swords are as light as balsa wood, and both the perfect summer sky and the lightning-filled storm are painted backdrops.

Eventually, nothing is left of the Arcadia Gateway but mundane objects. As life dies, so do dreams. As dreams, so the fae.

Stories that could take place in the Arcadia Gateway include:

• If any of the Garou are Fianna with close ties to the fae, and in particular either a love or a comradeship with a particular fae, then the Apocalypse could be the backdrop for a heartbreaking romance among the ruins. What makes setting such a story in the dying Arcadia Gateway intriguing is that the emotional challenges are juxtaposed with the physical ones — as the many wonderful things that the Fianna delighted in weaken in the Arcadia Gateway, the physical threats also decline. The death of the Arcadia Gateway is not an Armageddon but decidedly mundane, an Apocalypse of cockatoos. There are many ways that a Storyteller could take such a story. The Apocalypse might not just be in the place but in the people, and no matter where the dear friend or lover is taken she falters, becoming increasingly distracted, disinterested and forgetful, eventually becoming someone very different than who she used to be before fading away altogether. It is equally possible that she might be unable to leave the Arcadia Gateway ("It's colder out there.") even though staying means surely losing her mind and dying. Either way, the story should be tragic — a rescue mission that must be tried but could never succeed.

• The Arcadia Gateway has a spark. Somewhere deep in the woods, away from the trails, yet untarnished by both the apathetic Apocalypse the Realm faces and containing the richness of dreams and nightmares there is yet a spark, the last piece of the Arcadia Gateway to crumble. Can this be saved from the despair that threatens to destroy the Gateway?

Doing so is not easy. Because it is the strongest part of the dying realm, the dangers that are unique to the Arcadia Gateway remain as strong as ever, and even Garou are hard pressed to match them. Monsters so close to the heart of the Arcadia Gateway cannot be defeated by sheer brawn and instead must be tricked with cunning. At the deepest point of the Realm they

Absent Friends

For the Fianna who claimed to stand as allies with the fae, the Apocalypse comes as a horrible shock. At their greatest hour of need, the fair folk are silent. Neither the darkest Queen nor the most hallowed King sends forces of sidhe knights or trollish horrors to the Garou's aid, there are no great mystic miracles of arcane sorcery, and the Dreaming dies with a whimper. Those who search their souls find that perhaps this was as it was meant to be. After all, the fae were never Gaia's Warriors, nor really Gaia's anything. Though She created them, they were always their own creatures, fickle as the wind, never with the heavy obligations the Garou shouldered.

At the last, the Apocalypse comes to those to whom Gaia entrusted it. To expect others to fight their battles with them was always a faint hope at best.

find the spark that fuels it — and take it out of the Realm, consigning all those in it to die instantly.

But should they somehow manage to avert Apocalypse, this spark might somehow survive along with the world. If kept somewhere safe, somewhere warm and still filled with dreams, the spark might survive long enough that it could be restored into the Near Umbra, and the Arcadia Gateway might again be reborn. Where this place is relies, of course, upon the Storyteller.

Atrocity Realm

One of the most despised and horrible of the Near Realms, this blighted place is also one of the most important to the Wyrm's plans. A writhing pit of Wyrm energies and spirits, the Atrocity Realm is the home of the Breeding Pits, a massive spawning pool of Banes. By connecting this Realm to the Penumbra via a column of flesh, the Wyrm allows the Breeding Pits to supply him with a continuous stream of Bane soldiers in the Last Battle, and also to instantly gain some shock troops by bringing the guardians of the Realm into the Penumbra. It is such an obvious decision that the Banes came quickly, and left behind a treasure to be found.

The spirit of the Perfect Metis.

In the Atrocity Realm, most of the atrocities that occur every second are (or at least, *were*) projections of the real world — reflections with no physical or spiritual reality. However, as not simply a victim of an atrocity but a spiritually important *signifier* of Atrocity, the actual spirit of the Perfect Metis was transferred into the Atrocity Realm, to experience the horrors of torture and death over and over for eternity. This is no mere emanation but an actual living being — whimpering, lame, constantly tortured by Banes, and helpless. Taken out of the Atrocity Realm and away from the torturing, violating Banes hovering around, then the cub's suffering would end. However, other problems exist. Being submerged in the Atrocity Realm has imprinted the Wyrm's footprint upon the Perfect Metis… as well as the emanations.

The non-living emanations are beginning to act decidedly *alive*. Some are beginning to fight back against their oppressors, usually with little success, but there is fight where there was none before. There are still enough Banes in the Atrocity Realm to keep them in check, despite this strange occurrence, but only *barely* enough.

So far, no one, not even the Wyrm's forces, is aware of what has happened. The introduction of the Perfect Metis has "infected" the Realm, turning the inhabitants into more than reflections. The emanations are not spirits, they remain only half-real, but have been given minds and individual personalities. In a way, this is even more horrible — no longer mere depictions of torture, they are actual victims who feel it again and again. But they have also been given will, and a desire to escape. The reduced number of Banes is in the Realm is only fueling this, and all it needs is a spark to drive it.

But like the Perfect Metis, they too are now symbols of defilement. And like Typhoid Mary, they corrupt anything they touch with the Wyrm's influence. Were they to escape into the Penumbra, they would infect it, turning all they touch into half-real beings like themselves. Those infected become touched by the Atrocity Realm. They start to have nightmares of being tortured, molested, or killed. Wounds indicative of horrible brutality spontaneously open up, great wracking pains speak of other torments. Eventually, the victims die, twisted into foul corpses by tortures they never actually suffered, but felt nonetheless. Then they half rise, still leaving a corpse on the ground, but their strange not-quite spirit stepping forward, seeking an escape from a prison they were never in.

This is, of course, the sort of thing the Wyrm would joyously unleash if he knew the full extent of what had happened. Which only underlines the importance of the Garou working *quietly* in the Atrocity Realm if they intend to go there. And the Perfect Metis is indeed a genuine reason to go there. (See "Erebus", pg. 56 for more details on the eventual fate of the Perfect Metis.)

Other possibilities for games involving the Atrocity Realm include:

- The Atrocity Realm is the most prolific producer of Banes among all the Realms. Therefore, destroying the Breeding Pits would be a major tactical victory for the Garou in the Last Battle. But actually doing so is going to be a nightmare, because even as you attack them more are born. What possible way can there be to shut down the Pits, and is it even possible to use the emanations against the Breeding Pits without unleashing them upon the Penumbra?
- A clever Garou pack may work out that, if a Realm is connected directly to the Wyrm's base of operations on the Last Battleground, and that the Realm can be accessed from elsewhere, then there is a potential opportunity for a massive flanking attack. But how can the Garou successfully lead a small army through the Atrocity Realm? What problems do they encounter in the attempt? And has the Wyrm anticipated this and prepared a lethal response?
- A more shockingly personal story might see one of the pack contaminated by the emanations of the

realm. The Atrocity Plague is spread by the touch of the half-alive emanations of the Atrocity Realm, those that they have killed, and the Perfect Metis. Any who are touched by one of the 'infected' may immediately make a Stamina roll, difficulty 7, to resist catching it. The only exception to this is being touched by the Perfect Metis, in which case no roll is allowed. (Which means that yes, carrying the Perfect Metis from the Atrocity Realm is a death sentence and the supreme sacrifice.) Being hit by one in combat counts as a 'touch,' as does hitting one of them with claws or teeth.

If a player's character is corrupted, the Storyteller should keep track of the Plague's "Strength." For those touched by an emanation, the Strength begins at 1, for those touched by the Perfect Metis it begins at 3. Each additional touch raises this by 1. At the beginning of every scene, the Storyteller should make a resisted roll of the Plague's Strength against the character's Stamina, difficulty 6 for both. Every success the Plague scores above the character inflicts one level of unsoakable aggravated damage and raises the Plague's Strength by one. This damage is in the form of sudden wounds that open up, often along the belly, hands, feet, face, anus and genitalia. Should the player botch the roll, the Plague affects their mind and they are incapacitated by waking nightmares for as many turns as the Plague's successes, in addition to the damage suffered. Should the Plague botch, the Plague's strength reduces by 1, but never falls to 0. The Plague cannot be cured by anything short of Erebus, and in some cases not even by that.

Finally, every night an infected person sleeps is filled with pure horror in nightmares. The victim's Willpower drops by 1 for every time he sleeps.

Battleground

The Battleground has never been better named. Before the Apocalypse, Battleground was divided and formal. Large wide trails marked the difference between Napoleonic infantry battles and British Naval conflicts; between legendary Garou wars and ultra-modern American skirmishes. The wars never mixed and any walking along the trails were safe. But in superimposing the Last Battleground onto the Penumbra, the Wyrm destroyed that ordered state. Now, the Battleground has become a single, massive war. Nazi soldiers attempt blitzkrieg on Nordic hordes and seem unconfused about the change. Armies of crusaders face off against trenches of allied troops in France, and die in withering machine gun fire. Nor is there anywhere safe any longer — the trails have been ground into mud by soldiers' feet and tanks' treads.

And inch-by-inch, the soldiers die. The battles stop replaying themselves over and over, and the soldiers gasp their last breath on the muddied ground, never to breathe again. With the greatest battles of millennia all represented and so many soldiers fighting, it could take weeks, or even months, but some day the fighting is going to stop, with every last soldier dead, save maybe one — the last man standing.

Only one place remains unpolluted — the Last Battleground, otherwise known as the Plain of the Apocalypse. Here, the three warring hordes continue their eternal battle around the Last Battleground. Such is their fury that even the armies around them cannot breach their lines, and thus the Last Battleground remains pure and ready for Apocalypse.

Some possible story ideas for games taking place outside or around the Plain of the Apocalypse include:

• Breaching the wall! Some Garou, deciding that the Last Battle is lost before it begins, may decide to try and change the rules by attacking the Warring Hordes rather than the Triatic Wyrm. This is a crazy assault, only slightly less insane than attacking the Wyrm head-on. Oddly enough, the smartest groups to attack are the Wyld forces, since in these last days they're the weakest of the three. To have any chance of success requires more than just powerful weapons and a mighty pack — it takes cunning and political savvy, since only a small army of Garou could hope to breach the wall. And it's a morally uncertain mission, since the Margrave has clearly not ordered any such attack and is planning on a straight assault. But if his plan is suicide, not just

How Does That Work Again?

The Last Battleground is a strange place, even for the Umbra. It exists simultaneously in both the Penumbra and Battleground, connected by the central column of flesh. It is important to note that in both locations it is the same place — not even two identical, synchronized locations but the actual same place. So when you step off it, do you step into the Penumbra, or Battleground?

The answer is that you don't step off it. Surrounding the Plain of the Apocalypse are the Warring Hordes, a mass of Weaver, Wyld and Wyrm spirits constantly in battle with one another. Anyone trying to step off that way is killed, and the same goes for anyone trying to get in. Only one side doesn't have that barrier, which is the side that opens up onto a caern. This caern only exists in the Penumbra, so you automatically enter onto the Plain via the Penumbra, and can only exit it from there.

And since it's the same place, you can't find your way into the Battleground, remove your second self from the other Plain of the Apocalypse, and create infinite Garou warriors. Nice try, though.

for the Garou but for Gaia, then what is the use of following orders?

The good news is that once the lines are breached, they stay open fine. Masses upon masses of armies from every era of military history pour into the Plain of the Apocalypse and begin attacking just about everyone. What this actually accomplishes is a good question. It might play in favor of the Garou by effectively nullifying the numbers advantage the Wyrm's army possesses. But it could also end up collapsing the Garou's efforts as the Wyrm easily destroys the forces coming toward his army, but the Garou are overwhelmed and die in large numbers. Finally, and most frighteningly, breaching the walls open up the possibility of outside armies employing nuclear strikes. Upon entering the Penumbra, they cease to be replicas of nuclear weapons and show themselves as the spirits of nuclear weapons, screaming and screeching like warning siren banshees. Again, this could be both good and bad. The bad news is obvious, they're spirits of the Wyrm and when they explode in the Penumbra the spiritual damage is like another Bangladesh, probably with a much wider radius. But the world survived the spiritual damage of Bangladesh and might be able to survive this. And could using the Wyrm's weapons against him destroy the Wyrm, or at least damage him so much he'll be pushed back into the Deep Umbra? It might.

Storytellers can simulate the players' attempts to breach the Warring Hordes with an extended roll. For every twenty dots of Strength and/or Brawl the entire force of Garou attacking the Hordes have, roll one die. If they are attacking the Wyrm forces, the difficulty is 10 and they need 30 total successes. Every failed roll inflicts 5 levels of unsoakable aggravated damage to a random Garou in the attacking force. Attacking the Weaver is difficulty 9 and requires 40 successes. Failed rolls inflict 4 levels of unsoakable aggravated damage. Last of all, attacking the Wyld is difficulty 7 and requires 25 successes. Failing a roll inflicts 4 levels of unsoakable aggravated damage. Botching any roll means that the attacking force impales themselves upon the pikes of the Warring Hordes and is routed, with many deaths.

• The Legendary Realm has been devastated, and the great heroes' spirits are now dead. But might they still exist in Battlefield? And would it be possible to somehow sneak them through or over the Warring Hordes? In the chaos that is now the Battlefield, finding a specific hero, or even finding an old Garou battle, is like finding a needle in a haystack, requiring a Wits + Enigmas roll (difficulty 9) and finding a way past the Warring Hordes is left purely to the Storyteller's reckoning. But it might just be possible, and well worth the time.

CyberRealm

The CyberRealm isn't one of the driving forces against the Apocalypse. It was only meant to be.

Deep within the recesses of the computer world, a simulation began many years ago, attended to by Pattern Spiders and Net Spiders. The Weaver herself directly fueled this simulation. (Or, at least, an aspect of the Weaver.) Incredibly powerful, the simulation existed on its own and purely for its own sake. It was devoted to understanding the strange actions of the Wyrm, and such a mammoth undertaking drew tremendous power from the Realm. (Leading to many technological feats beginning to fail within the Glass Walker's tribal homelands, which are attached to the CyberRealm. As the simulation requires more and more power, this extends to the CyberRealm proper.) For most of its existence, the simulation met with no results. Then, two additional factors were entered into the equations the Red Stars.

Within minutes, the simulation created its terrifying output. And the simulation began to change. Circuitry rearranged and programs rewrote themselves. The computer became a weapon. One lonely Net Spider, lurking through the halogen halls, came when beckoned by the Computer.

It was killed when the CyberWolves finally decided to wage their uprising against the lords of Uptown.

Now the CyberRealm is in chaos. A ragtag but well equipped group of shapeshifters and spirits known as the CyberWolves have begun an armed insurrection against the spirits that rule the Realm. (See *Umbra Revised*, pg. 59 for more details.) This battle has lead to the Weaver's main gambit in the Apocalypse War being isolated within it, and has prevented the Weaver from being able to tell anyone about the weapon she has constructed. However, the Weaver is not sitting still while the Apocalypse begins. She is, however, treading very carefully, aware of just how much she stands to lose should humanity panic. (The Weaver is hoping to come out of this with the cities and her handiwork intact, not in pieces. This isn't out of misguided hope, but rather out of her most basic nature as the creature of order.) Some of her options include:

• Contacting the Garou most loyal to her, the Cyber Dogs. A disgraced camp of Glass Walkers devoted to post-biological life concepts and cybernetics, these werewolves can be easily contacted via their own cybernetic devices. (That clearly only work because of the Weaver's active hand.) This is her preferred op-

tion, because the Cyber Dogs have clearly shown their loyalty to her above Gaia. (Although some defected after their tribe's judging claws dug in.) Should there be a Cyber Dog in the players' pack, then this could lead to a story of personal and camp redemption — from the claws of the forsaken comes deliverance. Should the Storyteller elect to allow a pack of Cyber Dogs to find the Weaver's weapon, then a horrible alliance forms as the soldiers of Gaia and the Weaver battle the common enemy.

• If unable to contact the Cyber Dogs, then the Weaver could also summon help via GWnet. Since the Glass Walkers opened up the communications network, the Weaver could use Net Spiders to bring just about any group (including the players' pack) into the CyberRealm. This option has drawbacks for the Weaver, however, and different options for the Storyteller to exploit. Is using the weapon worth the risk of playing into the web of the Weaver? Could she be looking not only to survive the Apocalypse but in fact win it, too? (Which could then transition into scenarios from the chapter *Weaver Ascendant.*) This storyline can take the form of the classic deal with the devil, where the Garou must deal with the weaker enemy in order to fight with the stronger one. In fact, while Glass Walkers seem like the natural choice for a CyberRealm story, it may be far more interesting to use Shadow Lords and Get of Fenris packs, whose moral and ethical character will be far greater tested by the options and costs put before them.

No matter how the Weaver manages to get news of the weapon out, the battle to actually obtain it is fierce and difficult, and above all requires stealth and secrecy. The main reason the Weaver hasn't done the obvious — give the weapon to either the CyberWolves or the lords of Uptown — is that both would kill for the weapon and then turn it on their rivals. This would quickly destroy most of the defenses of the CyberRealm and remove one of the few oases of relative peace left in the Apocalypse. So far, the CyberRealm's natural defenses and powerful Weaver-fueled potency has left it untouched by the Wyrm's forces. But this oasis hangs on a knife-edge that is only sharpened by the Weaver's attempt to save the world she has spent so long sculpting. (See page 196 for details of the Weaver's creation, the Lisamaru Blade.)

Other smaller scenarios can also exist in the CyberRealm:

• A pack of Glass Walkers use the technologically empowered aspects of the realm to create a hyper-technological emergency medical bay in the CyberRealm to bring wounded Garou from the Last Battleground and treat them within seconds to put them back into the fight. Despite Garou's natural regeneration, this medical bay is capable of restoring lost limbs and saving the lives of Garou that would otherwise be lost. They also do this without any direction from the Margrave or any other "official" group among the Coalition, and thus earn tremendous distrust. Do they eventually become helpful, or is their dissenting presence eventually destructive?

• In the time just before the Last Battleground, the hunt for more soldiers leads a group of Garou (either Glass Walkers or *very* brave Garou from other tribes) to the CyberRealm. There are many potential allies here such as the lords of Uptown and their Spider Patrols and the CyberWolves have as much a reason as the Garou to fight against the Wyrm. After all, the Wyrm is as much an enemy of the Weaver as the Wyld. However, these two main groups are at war, and to bring them together to help fight the Apocalypse takes skilled diplomacy. This is a fine chance for the Children of Gaia and Philodox to show their capabilities.

Erebus

While other Realms fall swiftly beneath the enemy's power, Erebus (at least initially) stands firm. The Incarna that rules Erebus, Charyss, is both awesomely powerful and furiously opposed to the Wyrm, and the Realm's natural defenses are highly effective — a burning lake of silver renders it impossible for the Black Spiral Dancers to traverse it. The frightening spirit guardians of the Realm, the Brood, feed on Rage, making them particularly vicious against the Rage empowered Banes that are the Wyrm's foot soldiers. If the Garou fall, it is likely that Erebus will be the last Realm to fall afterwards — but it will fall. Despite all the Realm's resources, not even Charyss can withstand the awesome might of the Wyrm's armies. But for now, the Wyrm awaits the Last Battle, leaving the contained Erebus to wait fearfully for his charge.

Unfortunately, Charyss knows how crucial her domain is, and has no intention of letting it fall, regardless of what greater costs this may have. Erebus is her domain, and for her protecting it is of the supreme importance. As a result, she has now given one simple yet terrifying new order to one of her children — Cerberus has been told to attack any trying to enter Erebus. As an opponent, Cerberus is fearsome, and any Garou seeking to enter Erebus find this a most difficult task. Also, simply killing Cerberus, a difficult task in itself, leaves Erebus notably less defended and weakens a strong point in Gaia's defense.

This paranoia is unfortunate, because in Erebus holds a tremendous opportunity. The Triatic Wyrm is anchored into the Penumbra by three sacrifices. Were one of these to be reversed, his anchor to the Near

Umbra would be lost. So what would happen if the Perfect Metis were brought to Erebus?

Firstly, any suffering the Plague are immediately seized upon by the Brood and forced into the Silver Lake. There they suffer three times three days, but they emerge from the Lake with their bodies healed and the unnatural nightmares purged from their mind, though they may have nightmares of their ordeal in Erebus forever onward.

The Perfect Metis, and anyone Plagued by the touch of the Perfect Metis, are also seized and plunged into the Silver Lake, where they writhe in agony for three times three times three days, and are then be pulled from the Lake by the Brood, dead. But in death, they are cleansed. The Perfect Metis, when pulled out, dies peacefully and is tormented no more. The sacrifice is reversed, for no longer does it serve as the perfect mark of the Defiler. (On a side note, once purified the dead spirit-form of the Perfect Metis can be brought out of the Umbra into the physical world normally, should players wish to administer a proper burial.)

This immediately severs the anchor that binds the Defiler Wyrm to the Near Umbra. Alone, this does nothing. But it also provides the opportunity for a tribe to re-enact the sacrifice of the Croatan to banish the Defiler back into the Deep Umbra. This in turn could do a number of things, all stunningly good for the Garou, depending on Storyteller decision:

For the Sadist Storyteller

Of course, a truly evil Storyteller (or one who suspects his players have read this book...) might decide to turn this scenario on its head — the sacrifices of the scions really *are* irreversible, and all the players have done is kill one of their own in a fool's quest. Be very careful about doing this; you're sure to piss your players off.

But if you allow for another gain of equal magnitude in another way, then this could be a terrific plot point as well, a moment of sheer frustration and anguish for the characters in their desperate zeal to save Gaia. Just don't do anything to intentionally spite your players, find reasons and story lines that benefit from your decisions.

- The other two of the Triatic Wyrm may still exist in a united form, but become horribly weakened by the departure of the Defiler. Rorg's arrows can now pierce its skin, as can Level 5 or above fetishes (such as Grand Klaives), granting the Garou a chance to defeat it in battle. Indeed, this is arguably the best of all possible scenarios — the Garou actually have a chance of not just delaying the Apocalypse but *denying* it by destroying one of the Triatic Wyrms.

- As the body of the Wyrm is in its Penumbral incarnation, the Wyrm becomes utterly disembodied. He becomes nothing more than the two Eyes of the Wyrm. While he maintains control of his troops and they retain tight order, his physical presence is nullified and his charge is weaker as a result. The battle is purely between the Wyrm's Banes and Black Spiral Dancers on one side and the Garou and their allies on the other.

- Weakened horribly and rendered impotent by the blow, the Wyrm realizes he stands to lose far more than he gains at this point and retreats into the Deep Umbra once more. Apocalypse has been averted... for now.

No matter which option the Storyteller chooses, this scenario should not be played lightly. This is a *crucial* turning point in the Apocalypse War, in which the Garou seize an advantage that they had not dared to dream might exist. Play Cerberus as a genuine guardian at the gate, a horrible foe that the characters must defeat to win great gains. Don't pull punches — if characters die, so be it! Great victories are not gained without sacrifice.

Other possibilities for games include:

- At the time of Apocalypse, the Silver Lake is still filled with dozens, if not more, Garou who have been burning to atone for their sins for years. Needless to say, rescuing any one of these soldiers would be a boon to the Garou in the Last Battle. But Charyss is, even in the face of Apocalypse, a harsh mistress to convince. She argues that the tainted souls burning in her Realm would not aid the Garou but taint the purity of their army and instead weaken it. Is a flawed soldier better than none at all? The characters need to demonstrate persuasiveness and powerful arguments to gain these soldiers on their side. And, of course, what if Charyss is *right*?

- If the Last Battlefield becomes a rout, it is possible that the fleeing Garou may try to enter Erebus as their last stand. It is well fortified and has many spiritual defenders. But will Charyss agree to let this place of purity become a battlefield? Will she judge the Garou as harshly as the Wyrm?

Flux Realm

While the Garou search for more allies, trying to uncover a way to score an impossible victory, the Triatic Wyrms wait patiently, content to see the Wyrm's minions end billions of lives of all kinds across the continents. Suffice it to say, right now the Triatic Wyrms are the Garou's predominant concern. If none among the wolves think to consider what the rest of the Wyrm's officers are doing now, then they will have made a mistake of epic proportions. While the Triatic Wyrm organizes the main

assault, the Urge Wyrms also plan to make their mark. In particular Khaaloobh, the Urge Wyrm of Consumption moves to finish a long-time project.

Throughout history, Khaaloobh nurtured a horrible little idea made real. It was tiny, invisible at first, but when fully formed was about the size of a mustard seed, colored milky bone white. But this seed is potentially devastating, a pure little burst of Wyrm-taint capable of replicating itself like a virus, corrupting the surrounding environment, and able to withstand almost any attempts at eradication. In the material world, it would still be fairly limited. It might corrupt a city with Wyrm-taint, at most, before it finally ran out of vectors. The same is true for most of the Near Realms. Except for the Flux Realm. Forever changing, shifting, molding back into itself, the seed would be caught up in the ebb and flow of the Realm and would soon infect all of it. Released into the Flux Realm, it could turn the Realm itself into an all-consuming monster. And so the Knight of Despair leaves the side of his lord, carrying the seed in a small satchel at his waist, and heads directly for the Flux Realm.

The characters' pack could be brought into the Flux Realm to stop the seed in a number of different ways. If the characters reach the Last Battleground before exploring many of the Realms, the Margrave might call upon them to investigate some more as he fears a move like this on the part of the Wyrm's forces. If the pack investigates the Flux Realm on its own, then it might encounter the "couriers" on its way in, and try to force them out of the Flux Realm on simple suspicion. One advantage the Garou have is that the creatures the Wyrm is using for this mission are aware of its importance and are thus nervous and unwilling to take risks — they are not going to drop the seed until they reach the very center of the Flux Realm. The Nightmaster, who could conceivably know about it, might also tell them of this plan. Finally, they might learn about it in Malfeas, where the seed was grown.

The Flux Realm represents a worst case scenario for the Garou — should the seed be planted, a second force of equal power to the Wyld will be unleashed in the Wyrm's service, and any hope the Garou might have had, little as it was, will be extinguished.

Two possibilities exist here, and Storytellers are encouraged to consider other ways the Flux Realm might be warped into a thing of the Wyrm.

First, the Flux Realm might become a direct force on the Plain of the Apocalypse. As the seed spreads Wyrm-taint through the Flux Realm, roots spring up that tear the Realm into six different parts, and these different parts then slowly warp themselves into monsters. As they begin to form, everything in the Flux Realm that does not belong to it (such as player characters) need to flee immediately, or die as the Flux Realm simply ceases to exist. These six monsters, each impossibly powerful, come into play in the Last Battle.

The second possibility is that the Flux Realm remains perfectly intact, but detaches from the Near Umbra, unreachable by any moon bridge or other entrance. Then it *attacks* the other Near Realms. Beginning at one corner of any Realm, a cancerous warping and twisting spreads across its lands, engulfing anything living therein in searing agony before it blinks out of existence. One by one, each of the Near Realms is completely erased, leaving not a trace. The Garou Nation, currently grouped together on the Plain of the Apocalypse in The Battlefield, must either flee as quickly as possible or be destroyed in one fell swoop along with the Realm. The Wyrm is also destroyed, but merely manifests once more in the Deep Umbra as the Apocalypse occurs before his eyes.

Needless to say, neither scenario will make the Garou happy. The only good news for them if the worst-case scenario is realized is that, as a creation of Khaaloobh, the seed is inherently unstable, constantly breaking down. Should the werewolves somehow manage to delay or halt the Flux Realm's advance, eventually it should be completely consumed by it's own disease. *How* exactly you stop a venomous unnatural plane of existence is an exercise best left to the Storyteller to consider.

Other possibilities include:

• The Flux Realm, much like the Cyber Realm, belongs lock, stock and barrel to one of the other members of the Triat, in this case the Wyld. As such, it is a safer place to be than Realms such as Pangaea, where the Wyrm's forces storm in more or less unopposed. (No matter how powerful the Incarna or even Celestine governing, nothing can withstand the force of one of the Triat set against it.) The danger here is that, even if the characters stop the seed, the Wyld is unpredictable and just as likely to kill them as help them. Even so, the Flux Realm might be the only place where the Wyrm is genuinely off-balance. If the Plain of the Apocalypse falls, can a last stand in the Flux Realm succeed?

• Or, perhaps even more intriguingly, can the seed be used against the Wyrm? If the tide at the Last Battleground begins to sway in the Garou's favor, the Wyrm calls his spirits to the battle to tries and win it at all costs. If all the Banes are at the Plain of the Apocalypse, then *every* soldier of the Wyrm is present for the Flux Realm to devour them. It also kills every Garou, but in their sacrifice, they might just save Gaia.

The Legendary Realm

The Legendary Realm's Apocalypse began early. It was sealed off a day or two before the sacrifice of the Perfect Metis. But a day in the normal world can last a century in the Legendary Realm, and those two centuries were dark as pitch.

The plan actually began years before, with Banes besieging the moon bridges that lead to the Legendary Realm. While this did not shut out all contact the Garou had with the Legendary Realm, it helped to reduce their presence and protected the "Third City," a massive black castle held by the Wyrm in the very middle of the Legendary Realm. The Banes slowly built their numbers, and then during the new moon they made their move, seizing and sealing all entrances and exits from the Realm. Soon, huge numbers of Banes poured from the Third City and descended upon the kingdoms of the Garou heroes. These wars were swift — Banes with wings descended from above and shattered defenses from behind, while more powerful Banes rushed from the broken lines. Over a decade, the battle was waged, and the Wyrm won.

What was intended, however, was not conquest but the genocide of Garou history. One by one, the greatest of the Garou's heroes were brought into the Third City. One by one, they were systematically abused, tortured, debased, defiled and humiliated, before they were torn apart. Many were forced to re-enact their great battles, but by butchering dogs or human children instead of their foes. Those not being tortured huddled together in massive cages and compounds, waiting to die. The genocide lasted centuries in the Legendary Realm and ended only after the sacrifice of the Perfect Metis. Then the gates opened once more. The Third City was deserted, as the Banes therein made their way to the Plain of the Apocalypse. All that is left is ruins, dust, snow and corpses left in shallow open ditches.

Story ideas could include:

• **Trapped Within** — The pack is in the Legendary Realm when the Third City begins its campaign. They are separated from outside help, and the odds are clearly against them in the war. However, they do have the chance to perhaps hide and save as many of the lives from this Realm as they can. The "Wylderness" that surrounds much of the Realm is full of potential hiding places (even hidden bunkers could be built there) and the south of the Realm is dominated by a tremendous snowstorm known as Fimbulwinter. A deadly place, certainly, but no more so than the rest of the Realm and the prospect of freezing is certainly more attractive than being hideously tortured to death at the hands of the Wyrm. Can the characters survive until the invaders leave? How many lives can they save? And is there a point where too large a group will attract attention, dooming them all? How do they choose who survives and who is sent to die?

• **Never Before, Not Now, Not at All** — While the Legendary Realm's destruction is designed primarily as an outrage against the Garou Nation as they see their history defiled and destroyed by the Wyrm, there is certainly plenty of opportunity for preemption in this case. Garou curious as to why Banes are making such a determined effort to block moon bridges into the Legendary Realm can be led to investigate. There are two challenges such a pack needs to overcome, however.

The first of these is discovering exactly what the plan is. It's not something with a terrible amount of broadcast details. The massive iron gates used to close off the Realm can be found, but they merely reveal the goal of closing the Realm off, not what is coming next.

The second problem is the sheer scale of the attack. The Third City is a projection from Malfeas itself, and Maeljin Incarnae rule there. They have all the Banes Malfeas can spare to make the attacks. (In fact, while the main reason the Wyrm wanted the Legendary Realm dead was psychological warfare against the Garou, part its purpose was to train the Banes before the Last Battle.) However, the characters do have the combined strength of the many legendary Garou warriors backing them up. Storytellers who want to give their players a test-run before running their Apocalypse chronicles could certainly use the Legendary Realm as a warm up.

• **Secrets in the Ruins** — The pack arrives to the Legendary Realm once it has already been defiled. The chill of the Realm is tangible, no one can feel *life* in the place from the moment they step in. However, one member of the pack (Whichever one has the highest Gnosis) senses something — something still alive and meaningful. Time is their greatest adversary as the Fimbulwinter begins to chill them. (This can be simulated with Stamina + Survival rolls, at increasing difficulty as they advance further into the heart of the blizzard. Three successes are needed to ward off all harm, each success less than three inflicts one unsoakable aggravated level of damage. Spending a point of Willpower wards off one level of damage, but any character with no Willpower left takes *twice as many* health levels of damage from the Fimbulwinter instead.) What the pack eventually finds in these wastes is a question for the Storyteller to answer, but numerous possibilities exist. It might be the Wyrmhole that was used to smuggle Banes into the Realm for the war and a direct path into Malfeas. Or it might be the last survivor among the Legendary Garou. Or perhaps it might even be the First Klaive (see **Hammer and Klaive**), cradled in the frozen arms of a gentle, beautiful Glade Child.

Malfeas

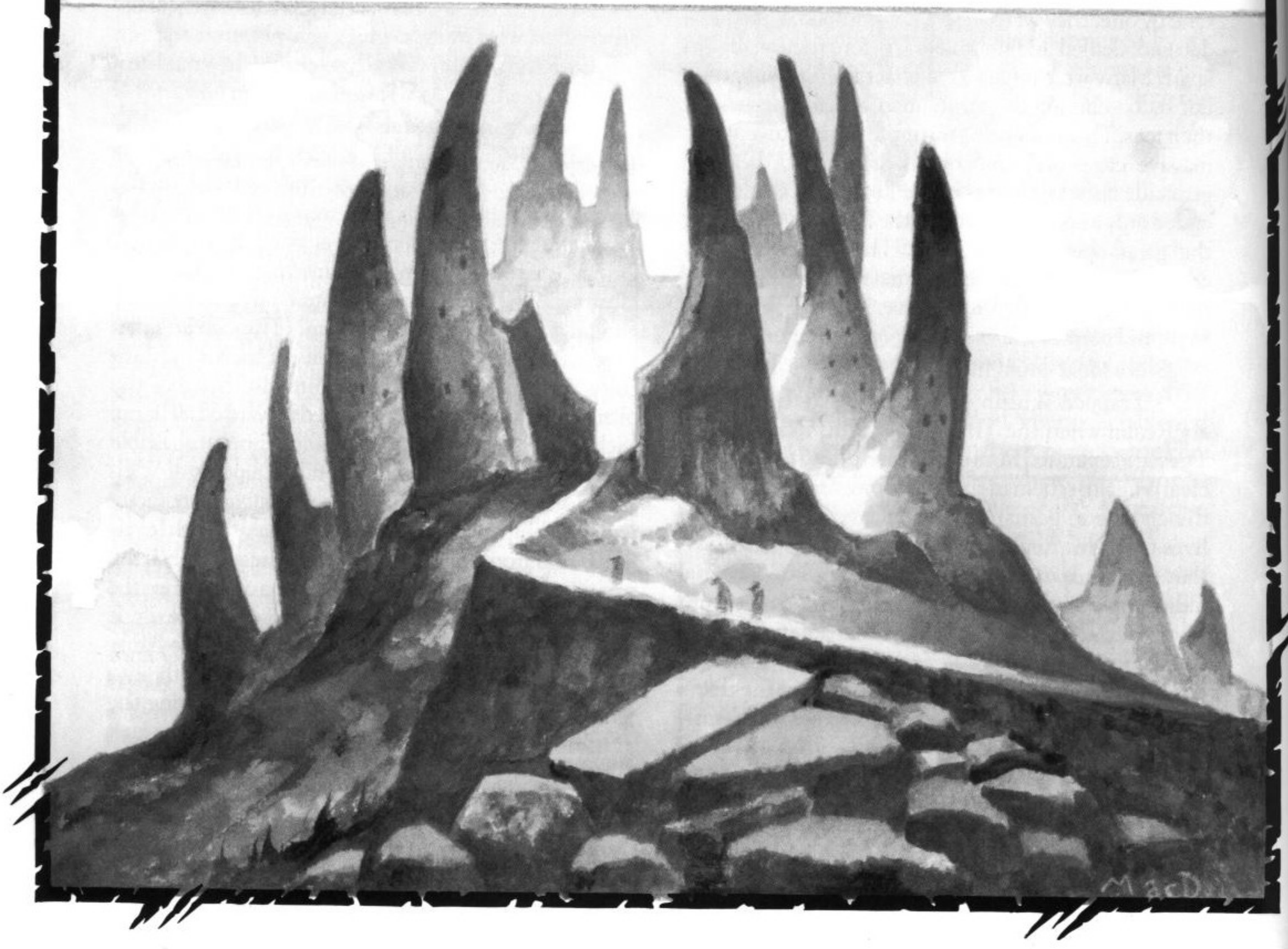
Hell does a brisk trade in Apocalypse. Malfeas is chaotic come the last days, for while describing it as the central command post for the Wyrm credits the foul pre-creation thing with a greater mind than it has or would condescend to use, such a description has some truth. Many of the Wyrm's plans stem ultimately from Malfeas, the most blasphemous patch of *Terra Umbra* the Garou know.

Ironically, this means Malfeas is one of the Realms in which the Garou have the most to gain. Chaos means that werewolves who understand stealth and can choose appropriate targets might be able to deal great damage to the Wyrm deep within its own home. And there are many available targets. The only problem is that none of them are easily destroyed.

The first of these is the Temple Obscura, the massive testament to the Black Spiral Dancers and their worship of the Wyrm. Here, the Black Spiral Dancers gather as a tribe in final demented prayer before taking to the field of battle. Collapsing the Temple could obliterate most of the tribe, breaking apart the Wyrm's foremost shock troops. With its warped architecture, however, any pack attempting such an undertaking finds much frustration. No amount of understanding of conventional architecture reveals where critical junctions in the Temple are, nor what it would take to destroy them.

Instead, the characters must try to understand the mind of the Wyrm-things that designed it, and such thinking is risky in itself. Doing so requires an extended Intelligence + Enigmas roll (Difficulty 8) and a total of twenty successes. Should any single roll in this action fail, the Storyteller should roll a number of dice equal to the number of rolls taken so far in the extended action, against a difficulty of the character's Willpower. Each success takes one *permanent* Willpower from the character, and a single derangement also emerges in the character's personality. (Most likely Obsession or Paranoia as the character begins to see the Wyrm's touch in everything.) A botch is deadly — the character's mind snaps and cannot be retrieved. Actually destroying such a point is likewise not an easy task, but could be achieved (for example) by unleashing a fire spirit from a clay jar fetish.

A curious second target for a more cerebral Garou might be the Earth Pit. A massive chasm in Malfeas that is filled with pollution and death, the Earth Pit represents an Earth spiritually subjugated to the will of the Wyrm. A scenario that is awfully similar to the way



the Apocalypse is playing out. Thinking werewolves might ponder that the purpose of the Pit was never mockery after all — it was planning. Does the Earth Pit still inform the way the Apocalypse is playing out? If so, then destroying the Earth Pit might throw the Wyrm's forces into chaos, unable to act coherently. It is up to the Storyteller to determine whether this is true or not.

Another Possibility in the Temple

Inside the Temple Obscura is the actual spiral for which the Black Spiral Dancers are named, a warping hideous mosaic upon the Temple floor that links to the "Shattered Labyrinth." By dancing the spiral, the Wyrm and the Garou are able to invade each other's minds, breaking the sanity of the dancer and turning him into one of the Black Spirals. After their prayer, the Black Spiral Dancers leave, and for the first time in history, the spiral is unguarded. A Garou could take the ultimate risk — to try and dance the spiral and keep their mind intact.

Such a task is near impossible. No one has ever done so. Without a Willpower of at least 9, the task is impossible — no ifs, ands, or buts. If this requirement is met, however, the Storyteller should construct a set of nine challenges for the player, based around the character's own background and the three aspects of the Wyrm. (Three challenges for the Beast of War, etc.) If he meets a challenge and come away successful, he must roll Willpower (difficulty 4) and lose one temporary Willpower. If he fails the challenge, he continues down the spiral but must roll Willpower (difficulty 9) and lose one permanent Willpower. If either roll is failed, the character's mind breaks.

All of this should be done away from the rest of the players, to keep them in suspense. Should the character's mind break, ask the player to continue, but with his character now covertly in the Wyrm's service as a double agent. He can return to the pack with false stories of how to kill the Wyrm. But if the near-impossible happens and he succeeds in dancing the spiral without going mad, the Storyteller could reveal the secret of the Wyrm's destruction (such as, for example, that by piercing his eyes with a weapon imbued with pure sunlight he can be blinded to his own identity and treat himself as yet one more thing to destroy, or that he can be killed by his own teeth and that one such tooth exists in a place of the Storyteller's choosing) which should be true, but the other players won't know it. Either way, you'll put most of your troupe on edge, and that's certainly not a bad end result.

Pangaea

As the Garou explore what has happened to the Near Realms, places they thought they knew well, some may be moved to Harano. The Legendary Realm is awash with the blood of history, Arcadia no more than a façade, and even Wolfhome undergoes a bittersweet transformation into something less sinister but more horrible. It is therefore something of a relief that primordial Pangaea remains whole — so far. But something horrible has begun, and a wise character may note it maybe an hour after he arrives, when the Elder Serpent (a massive dragon that nearly rules the Realm) hasn't either attacked the pack or demanded that it begin a quest for him.

While it is not immediately obvious, Pangaea is hideously diseased. This disease began in a hunting tribal group that had been corrupted by the Wyrm, and were also cannibals. They took particular delight in consuming the brains of the fallen, not merely of their prey but also of their own dead. Such behavior made them horribly susceptible to an epidemic, for when one of their own fell, three of their kin would quickly consume the diseased tissue. Once this malady infected the entire tribe (and, in fact, some of their more noble enemies) the Wyrm made its move on Pangaea, giving the corrupted tribe the secret of fire. All the Wyrm needed to happen now was for them to misuse it, and eventually they did — burning huge swaths of Pangaea. The Elder Serpent, a creature loyal to the Realm, swooped from the sky to eat them up and stop the blaze. Now the disease festers, growing stronger and stronger in the dragon's stomach. If she dies, then the disease will consume Pangaea, and Gaia alike. For Pangaea is the soul and heart of Gaia, the primal point of creation from which Her life flows.

Understanding Gaia requires an conception of Her nature that few possess. Pangaea, as a pure expression of creation in its most beautiful and terrifying form, flows from Her. She is, in one sense, one and the same as Pangaea. The animals, plants and most especially the Elder Serpent are Hers. (The Elder Serpent, in fact, shares one mind with Gaia.) The three human races are also part of Gaia, but are also of the Wyld, Weaver and Wyrm, and Gaia embraces them all, for though the Triat exist without Her, their children cannot. Were Pangaea to die, would Gaia die with it? Not in the sense that the Apocalypse would be complete, and the world would die. But Gaia as a thinking force would. She would be essentially comatose, introducing nothing new and merely perpetuating life as it is. And indeed, with the virus eating away at the Elder Serpent, She is more or less out of action.

But a brave and clever enough pack of Garou might be able to heal the Elder Serpent. She is currently coiled, frozen and shivering from illness, around the tallest peak in Pangaea's mountain ranges, and the disease itself is still only in her stomach. The trick then, is in curing it directly. Though not Garou, the Elder Serpent needs to be purified, and the most obvious source of purification is Erebus. If the pack quests to Erebus, they may be able to petition Charyss for a goblet that seems to hold nothing but air. If this cup is emptied onto anything other than the disease, then the Storyteller should roll ten dice at difficulty 4. Each success inflicts one *permanent* level of damage upon the victim, which can never be healed again. The flesh simply dissolves under the contents of the cup. This includes the possibility of it being poured anywhere upon the Elder Serpent other than her stomach, a punishment that will surely kill her. In order to successfully purify the Elder Serpent, the Garou need to force open her mouth (or talk her into opening it), descend down her cavernous throat into her stomach and empty it there.

But if they can succeed, the results are remarkable. The cup's contents simply vanish, and the world seems to go white for the characters. When they awaken, they are outside the Elder Serpent once more, and find themselves at the feet of a statuesque middle-aged woman. Her nude form is strong and Her eyes filled with staggering power. She carries the weapons of all elements in Her hands, and death has no touch upon Her. This is Pangaea, personified. As She stands before the players, She may address them with thanks, or She may simple look upon them with pride. Gaia's creation is endangered, and as both an avatar and an integral part of Gaia, She fights alongside them to protect it.

In the Last Battle, this avatar of Gaia fights alongside the Garou in Her form as the Elder Serpent. She is nearly as powerful as the Wyrm, and certainly acts to counter him. She has no statistics, (since much like the Wyrm, no numbers could possibly express Her) but concerns Herself purely with the Wyrm. She is an equalizer, but an equalizer that gives the Garou hope of winning. Notably, as She is Pangaea itself, once she leaves for the field of battle, the Realm vanishes.

The Scar

While Malfeas and the Atrocity Realm produce soldiers for the Last Battleground, the Atrocity Realm's factories double their output, driving their spirit slaves to death in order to produce swords and axes for the Black Spiral Dancers to carry into battle. Despite this increased activity, the Scar is perhaps the Realm the least changed by the coming of Apocalypse. Already strongly aligned with the Wyrm, yet not particularly one of his strongest places of power. The spirits in the

Scar are hardly the most fearsome. Nearly half are weak-willed drones that exist only to toil in the factories and follow the Wyrm more by rote than fervor, and the other half are brutal little thugs that only need to be tough enough to menace the drones.

A clever strategist might note that it might be the perfect location to build up a surprise force. A reasonably sized group of werewolves stand a good chance of successfully liberating the Scar, particularly since the nastiest of the Banes from the Realm have been moved to the Last Battleground.

Taking it in such a way that it remains useful for the Battlefield is considerably trickier, however. At the first sign of attack, the guards and bullies who run the factories rush to combat the werewolves, making them mostly a non-threat beyond their physical capabilities. But the twisted fat Banes that rule the Realm are another story. Cowardly and corpulent, they attempt to flee the Scar at the least sign of an uprising, right out through the Column of Flesh — thus alerting the Wyrm to the attack. If this happens, then immediately Banes begin to enter the Scar in massed formations, creating a bloodbath to slaughter the werewolves, factory workers and other Banes alike.

Encourage players to scout ahead in the Scar and pick out useful strategies. The offices of the factory owners are spread out across the Realm, but this can be made to work to the werewolves' advantage — a series of quick, short, overwhelming attacks can destroy the owners before they escape and the distance between them allows Garou to disrupt the flow of information. There is only one sure-fire exit from the Scar in the Column of Flesh. This presents a tricky situation, in that if the players simply post up guards all around the Column, they might be seen. But a set of packs near the Column but hidden from sight could butcher any fleeing Banes before they get close, and that might work perfectly well.

Once the Realm is secured, it can be used as a staging point for the Garou at the Last Battleground. It offers a major tactical advantage for Gaia's own troops, who assemble there for a flanking maneuver without the Wyrm's notice.

Other possibilities for stories in the Scar include:

• **Purifying the Factories** — Banes normally don't use weapons. But Garou do. And what Scar basically constitutes is an entire factory system devoted to creating spiritual objects. It's only a hop, skip and a leap of logic to figure out that it could be used to mass produce fetish weapons for the entire Garou Army… if it can be stripped of the omnipresent Wyrm taint. Is there time? Is the use of time justified? The question is harder than it might first appear — yes, there is very little time, because every minute Earth dies a little more. If the Garou lose the Last Battle, no amount of timeliness matters The Last Battle must be won for anything to matter. But if it takes too much time, then it may be that even a victory at the Plain of the Apocalypse produces nothing worth saving.

• **Repairing the World** — While the demise of the cities is probably something many Garou applaud, some groups (such as the Glass Walkers, but also possibly the Children of Gaia) feel compelled to try and save the cities and the human lives therein. The problem with this is that no amount of structural reinforcement stops the cities of the world tumbling down, it is the breaking Pattern Web that is causing the damage. As a spiritual factory, the Scar is filled with tools that can help to repair the Pattern Web, and a scavenger hunt might just prove useful.

Summer Country

The Summer Country, whose very existence many Garou doubt, was always thought to be the most secure of Gaia's lands. If even the most devout of Gaia's Chosen could not find it, how could the Wyrm ever do so?

It's All Too Easy…

Of course it is. All the major troops have been pulled back, the Realm is visibly weak, the Garou have a million opportunities… and the Wyrm has his soldiers effectively minutes away from counter-invading once again through the Column of Flesh. It's a set up, with the Wyrm just waiting for the Garou to bite. Why else would he bother linking Scar to the Penumbra? It offers him few decent soldiers, opens up another potential avenue of attack, and since when have Banes needed weapons, *or* Black Spiral Dancers, for that matter? The Wyrm lets the Realm fall. He waits patiently until the werewolves mass their troops in the Realm before beginning the counter invasion. Or perhaps, an even more sinister possibility is that the factories have all been making not weapons, but explosives, and are just about ready to be detonated…

Or, alternatively, not. The Scar is a Wyrm Realm, and all the other Wyrm Realms are linked, just in case they prove useful. Since it's been linked, it might as well be used as much as possible. It could be that it's a genuine blind spot the Wyrm hasn't noticed.

Then again, maybe the Wyrm is aware of it, and has his troops all perfectly positioned, awaiting the flanking charge with open maws. It's all up to the Storyteller.

The Wyrm's answer to that question was, of course, the Midnight Shadows. Given enough time, there is nothing that they cannot find, and that includes the Summer Country. And as the clock ticks down toward Apocalypse, the Wyrm has them searching for this Realm — and for Gaia. Swimming in from the ocean, onto the Crescent-shaped island, following the only outlet into the ocean it has, through the Forest of Promise, into a tiny glade in the lowest valley in the Realm. In this glade is a pool, deep and wide, with three shelves clearly visible through the crystal waters. A small, empty hut stands above this pool, and in the pool swim golden tadpoles. Immersed in the water, clad in grass and flowers upon the highest shelf, is where Gaia lays, a young Mother sleeping and dreaming of life and Her children.

Sooner rather than later, the Midnight Shadows find the Summer Country, and its defenses crumble at their approach. The Realm cannot be hidden any longer, but this also represents an opportunity for the Garou — if the Garou can follow the Midnight Shadows, they too can find the Summer Country, and can also find out the Shadows' final objective.

But the mere presence of the Midnight Shadows — even the presence of the characters — sounds the death knell for this fragile Realm. The Mountain of the Moon crumbles into avalanches, Cloudtop High falls from the sky, and so do the birds dwelling within it. The Well of Life pours forth blood, and in the glade where Gaia sleeps, the tadpoles become bloated green frogs that eat the other tadpoles. Gaia coughs and whimpers, Her strength ebbing finally, nearly dead from the constant illness the Wyrm inflicts upon Her.

When the players reach the glade, they need to make a split-second decision — the Midnight Shadows, dozens of them, descend upon Gaia and only an instant decision to rush forward and save Her can deliver Her from their jaws.

When the characters rescue Gaia, their troubles are not over. The Summer Realm is clearly collapsing in upon itself, and Gaia dies if left here. She needs to be taken back into the Penumbra, which presents the players with a troublesome decision: Do they try to find a new hiding place for Gaia where She will be far from danger, knowing that the Wyrm can ultimately find Her no matter where She hides? Or do they do perhaps the most horrifying thing they might imagine and take Her directly to the Plain of the Apocalypse within breathing distance of the Wyrm, but where the entire Garou Nation can protect Her?

Gaia Herself is not much help. Clearly weakened and on the verge of death, She can at best whisper a number of clues to the players about what is happening. She knows the fate of Rorg and the truth behind Ruatma, and also what is happening to Realms like Arcadia Gateway and Wolfhome. But She doesn't understand the Wyrm's aims, how the Scion's sacrifices work, what his overall goals are beyond "Apocalypse," and so forth. Gaia isn't a warrior, she's a mother; nurturing but wounded.

Hang On, Wasn't Gaia in Pangaea?

Yes, but remember that each of these scenarios is optional and not necessarily meant to be used together. Gaia's heart in Pangaea is set up for a Storyteller who wants to make Gaia a furious Mother who defends Her young from predators. In the Summer Realm, Gaia is more passive and in need of Her children to defend Her. Both are provided so that the Storyteller can make the choice most appropriate to her chronicle.

Of course, if you really want to, you can always argue that Gaia exists as the gentle Mother of creation and beautiful paradise present in the Summer Country, the spirit of Earth in the Aetherial Realm as Eshtarra, and the primordial spirit of furious nature in Pangaea as the Elder Serpent. If there was ever a time for stunning revelations, this is it.

Wolfhome

The first Garou to step back into Wolfhome in the Apocalypse notice the change immediately. No helicopters fly overhead. There are no sounds of guns shooting the wolves or the crackle of electricity from the camps. Nor are there the howls of the wolves. And, most tellingly of all, Garou no longer come to Wolfhome as wolves. Wolfhome is dead.

The ground is now gray and dust-ridden. Plants hang limply or exist as nothing more than brittle brown twigs. The buildings crumble apart and collapse to the ground. (Storytellers may ask for Dexterity + Alertness rolls at difficulty 6 at any time while walking in the cities here when buildings crumble. Failure inflicts five dice of soakable lethal damage as pieces of the building fall on top of the characters.) There is no stench of bodies because nothing is decaying. Nothing is breaking down and returning to life — it simply lies there, perfect and whole and dead. The bodies of wolves litter the countryside, the bodies of humans litter the cities. Wise Garou might realize that the cycle has been completed — once wolves hunted the foxes and rabbits in Wolfhome, but were then hunted by humans, and now the humans have been hunted down and slaughtered by the most efficient hunter of all: The Wyrm.

Here, then, is death. Here is the world without Gaia. Here is the world where the hunter wins.

Rather than a plot point for chronicles, Wolfhome is meant to act as a prophecy and a reminder to any Garou that have forgotten their place. Should the characters forget that the Apocalypse is *the Apocalypse*, and instead try to develop plans to flee the world (perhaps believing falsely that they can take some of Gaia with them) or just give up, then the Storyteller should bring the characters to Wolfhome and show them the Ghost of Apocalypse Future. Make this as vivid as possible — the faces of the dead include the faces of Kinfolk and allies, not one mark on their face to hide who they were. Show them their Caerns and their homes. Bring them face-to-face with what failing to fight is, and the cost of their cowardice: Gaia reduced to a hollow dust-ball.

Simply coming here takes its toll on a character's soul. Leaving no longer means reconnecting with your primal side, but managing to overcome the harrowing experience of being utterly separated from Gaia. Upon attempting to leave, each player must make a Willpower roll, difficulty 9. Success allows a character to leave as she summons the courage to prevent this world from coming to be. Failure destroys some of the Garou's soul, reducing her Gnosis by one. She must then make another Willpower roll, with the same consequences. Should the Garou run out of Gnosis, she is lost to Harano forever. She must be revived before she can leave. No rolls are given for this — it is something the Storyteller must decide has happened.

Possible storylines include:

• A second pack that the characters know state their intent to scout Wolfhome for potential allies in the upcoming Last Battle. They do not return. When the players' pack goes after them, they find the entire pack lost in Harano. The characters may try to bring them back, but the longer they stay and try to console the second pack, the greater the chance they too will suffer the same fate. Does a time come when they must be left to die?

• For a different take on an Apocalypse chronicle, a Storyteller could bring the characters to Wolfhome before the third sacrifice occurs, but after Wolfhome has died. While the characters (and the players) may not quite know yet what is to come, by bringing them to Wolfhome the message can be driven home in a slower, less overtly dramatic way than by throwing them into battles with Zhyzhak and trying to rescue the Perfect Metis.

The World Rotting From Within

While the Apocalypse takes place *within* the Umbra, it is a mistake to believe that the Apocalypse isn't physical. Quite the opposite. The physical world and the Umbra are inextricably linked, as the Garou are very aware. Pouring oil onto an ocean kills the spirits of the ocean, chopping down a tree can kill the Glade Child within. But the reverse is also true: Kill the spirit of the ocean, and it becomes "dead water," bereft of oxygen and unable to support life. Kill the pattern spiders in a city, and the structure of the city becomes unstable. (Garou and Fera, as both spirit and flesh, are immune to these attacks.)

And right now, Banes are rampaging through the Umbra, killing every spirit they see. Many, many spirits are dying. And the world is rapidly descending into chaos.

The Wyrm's forces kill more or less indiscriminately. However, some other factors come into play. The Weaver is, at the time of the Apocalypse, much more powerful than the Wyld, and likewise her armies. As a result, while the Wyrm's soldiers attack the Pattern Web, they are generally unable to do nearly as much damage as they can attacking Wyld-affiliated spirits. Conversely, the Garou are generally in positions to defend Wyld-spirits deep within the wilderness, hindering the Wyrm's efforts early on. As time goes on, the Wyrm's superior numbers wear down both the Weaver's guardians and the werewolves, decaying everything from within. Initially the most successful attacks are made on in-between places: small towns, farmlands, nature preserves and the like.

Of these, it is farmland that creates the most havoc. Animals become disease-ridden and crops fail. Food supplies are cut to a *tenth* of projected amounts, worldwide. First World nations like the USA initially don't suffer much, thanks to large stockpiles of grain, but the trends are definitely noticeable and a source of grave concern. Third World nations without such stockpiles suffer immediately. Starvation runs rampant.

In time, the Wyrm's attacks reach all spirits. Attacking the Pattern Web causes buildings to collapse due to "structural decay." Skyscrapers prove most vulnerable to this, and tens of thousands can die in a single collapse. Some warning signs are evident — metal groans as it bends, cracks appear before collapses, and so forth. But generally the signs go unnoticed until the buildings collapse, and when they do collapse they collapse instantly. More modestly built houses and the like remain dangerous due to roof collapses, but are not as immediate a threat. Roads begin to break apart and the reduced conditions increase traffic accidents. This results in more deaths but also exacerbates the food problems because of the increased likelihood of supply trucks being overturned or rerouted due to collapsing bridges.

The wilderness also suffers. Animals die in droves, not merely from their own spirits dying but also from

their food supplies becoming worthless. Plants wither and die, nothing provides life or nutrition. Those animals that don't inexplicably drop dead starve to death instead.

As the food situation progressively worsens, wars break out. Africa is the first continent to degenerate into open warfare, as its meager stockpiles are quickly run through. Wars ignite the Middle East, and the political powderkeg finally explodes. Acting on alliances and the panicked prospect of nuclear war coming out of Egypt or Israel, America sends in soldiers. In the blink of an eye, the planet is on the verge of world war.

Using the Physical Realm in the Last Battleground

How much time do the Garou have between the arrival of the Wyrm in the Penumbra and the Last Battle? The simple answer is: as much time as they're willing to allow. Every day that passes while the soldiers of the Wyrm run rampant throughout the spirit world killing everything in sight brings the world a little closer to chaos. While realistically, other factors would be involved (Margrave Konietzko is most probably the man who chooses when the Battle of the Apocalypse begins, unless one of the characters somehow gains his position) it makes more story sense to let the Battle wait for the players. This way, not only can you stuff in more into your game, you can allow the players time to soak it up rather than ramming it down their throats — this is it. This is the actual end of the world.

But don't let it be leisurely. Make the characters suffer for it. Find ways to send them back into the physical world, and there are plenty of ways to do so. Any human based Background is going to drop like a stone as the physical world deteriorates, so don't be afraid to start knocking points off without warning, a surefire way to get players back into the physical world to investigate.

Better yet, doing this forces a player to actually experience the world crumbling around him. He can discover why his Contacts rating has fallen though the floor —because some madman hyped up on narcotics slashed his main source's throat, convinced that he was somehow responsible for his family dying in their beds. Or he can discover why his Kinfolk Background vanished as a group of government soldiers "quarantined" his entire family.

If you do it right, you can show the players the havoc the Apocalypse is wreaking by putting it right before their eyes and affecting them directly. Force them to make the difficult choice — at what point is it no longer worth the effort to try to swing the odds in their favor by gathering allies, and they must start the battle now?

The Tribes in the Last Days

As the Last Battlefield emerges and the Garou Nation begins the slow march toward destiny, many former rifts and divisions begin to fade in importance. But others flare up to become troubling points of division. The difference between the two is mostly the Margrave's alliance. Under his guiding hand, the Garou Nation manages to actually form some sort of united front and puts aside the squabbles of the past. But those tribes least connected to the alliance become more difficult and antagonistic, requiring individual packs to make the decisions that their elders will not.

Black Furies

As one of the two first tribes to come under to Konietzko's banner, the Black Furies quickly develop close ties in the new alliance, and this helps them to focus their packs on the task at hand. Those closest to the Margrave, such as Kelonoke Wildhair, begin the process of rallying the tribe, and discussing exactly what the Margrave plans. Brutal honesty and the noted integrity of such allies help smooth over the distrust that many have for the Shadow Lord leader. Maybe as many as nine out of ten Black Furies are part of the Margrave's coalition.

One of the most notable barriers this breaks is the tribe's long-standing antagonism towards the Get of Fenris. The rift, while far from resolved, becomes increasingly unimportant. Wildhair herself describes the mood of the tribe by saying, "Unless we forget our differences for now, the differences will end up being forgotten forever." Taking this stance, most Black Furies are not opposed to working with Get of Fenris packs, although a great deal of distrust between the two still remains.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Black Furies as a tribe begin a much closer relationship with the Children of Gaia than they had before — Wildhair's advocacy to that tribe carries over and many of the Children attribute her philosophy to the entire tribe. As a result, in the time leading up to the Last Battle the Black Furies have to be even more on their guard than usual; heated words and violent deeds could well tear chunks from the alliance all too easily. In the Last Battle, Black Furies packs are expected (by Konietzko, by Wildhair, and by their own elders) to act as officers, showing the other packs what is expected of them and rallying the fallen troops.

Bone Gnawers

The Bone Gnawers are one of the "second connection" members of the Margrave's alliance — their involvement was primarily negotiated by the Glass Walker Elizabeth Genereader rather than the Margrave himself. However, this connection is much stronger than some of the others, since many Bone Gnawer packs have long known the advantages of dealing with the Shadow Lords. As two tribes of outsiders, they are particularly useful to each other. The issues of trust aren't nearly so problematic for the Bone Gnawers as for the packs from other tribes. Bone Gnawer packs deal with distrust as a matter of existence. As a result, most of the tribe joins. Perhaps seven out of every ten Bone Gnawers rally behind the Margrave and makes their way to the Last Battleground.

In fact, the larger rift in the relationship is that between the Glass Walkers and the Bone Gnawers. The two tribes have always possessed a strong degree of animosity for each other, with the Glass Walkers seeing the Gnawers as failures and the Bone Gnawers seeing the Walkers as one step short of traitors. Bone Gnawer elders have been mollified somewhat by seeing the *de facto* leader of the Glass Walkers bow to them as a lesser rather than simply demanding that they follow the Walkers' lead. Normally, the cynical children of Rat would see this as false prostrating, except for one fact: Genereader actually *is* younger and of a lesser rank (merely an adren at the time), which gave her words the ring of truth. Right now, many Bone Gnawer packs are willing to accept that just *maybe* the Glass Walkers might actually honor their rank, but are far too willing to be proven wrong.

In the Last Battle, Bone Gnawer packs come with few expectations other than that they fight well.

Children of Gaia

Also a "second connection" tribe, the Children of Gaia have been mostly pulled into Konietzko's alliance via the Black Furies and the efforts of Kelonoke Wildhair. To join the coalition required the tribe's elders to overcome one of the most primal of their conflicts — no two tribes could possibly be as remote in their ideals as the Children of Gaia and Shadow Lords. Standing for unity, the Children of Gaia could never see eye to eye with a tribe who argued that any relationship could and should be sacrificed in the war against the Wyrm. But the Black Furies, who had joined the Margrave eagerly, were a tribe they much admired for their grace and spirituality. In the end, many of the Children's elders petitioned the packs in their septs to join the coalition for one simple reason: regardless of the Shadow Lords' previous actions, Margrave Konietzko now pushes the tribes to unity. The argument does not stand up fantastically well. Maybe three of every five Children of Gaia make their way to the Last Battleground; the rest dig in to defend their caerns.

And yet among those who do join, all distrust is laid to rest. For all that the Lords' history suggests, now is a time of precedent being broken. The Red Stars have tinted the Umbra with blood, and those who join know it is time to fulfill their most sacred obligation to their Mother. On the Last Battleground, the Children of Gaia are considered to be among the most capable of soldiers. The Margrave holds a number of them in reserve initially, waiting to see where they can be tactically deployed.

Fianna

Almost as much so as the Silver Fangs, the Fianna begin the charge to Apocalypse rudderless and confused. In some ways, in fact, the Fianna have it worse, especially the American Fianna. Just when the news of the death of King Albrecht is beginning to sink in among their warriors, the other boot drops — the Ard Righ is dead as well. Unlike the Fangs, however, the Fianna have an excellent successor waiting in Son-of-Moonlight, a fact that eases the confusion tremendously. Following Bron Mac Fionn's demise, Son-of-Moonlight calmly takes the position of Ard Righ and begins spreading the word from pack to pack: "Come with us now, we go to die for Gaia." With his quiet demeanor and the trust he shows in his tribe, he manages to not only heal the rifts inflicted by recent losses but also by continent. Son-of-Moonlight quickly gains the respect of the entire tribe, and no tribe going into the Last Battle shows a greater sense of unity and purpose. Maybe four out of five Fianna join the coalition.

And yet some bickering and infighting still remain. Several packs, particularly those most loyal to Bron Mac Fionn, raise the issue of the Arcadia Gateway, fading away fast. These packs take exception to Son-of-Moonlight's "betrayal" of the Silver Fangs and begin to openly disobey orders. Son-of-Moonlight tries to find ways to bring these packs back into line, and one of his notable tactics is to double packs together in the field of battle, assigning troublesome packs a 'partner pack' of those loyal to him. He hopes that, if he can't summon loyalty to him, he'll at least be able to rely on these pack's loyalty to their tribemates and thus see them follow orders. It can't, he blackly reasons, reflect badly on him — if the strategy fails, no one will be around to criticize him for it anyway.

Get of Fenris

No tribe ended up better placed to see the Apocalypse come than the Get of Fenris. Their continued emphasis on martial prowess, adherence to tradition

and superb fetish culture are all excellent advantages in preparing for an Umbral war. As a result, the Get of Fenris have the smoothest acceptance and highest readiness for the Apocalypse of any tribe in the Garou Nation. The Margrave doesn't even need to try and win the Get of Fenris over, they begin heading to the Plain of the Apocalypse of their own accord. Everything they always suspected is true. Nine of ten Fenrir are present at the Last Battle.

What is more difficult, however, is getting the Get of Fenris to act as a part of a larger battle strategy under the Margrave's command. The Margrave, after all, has not earned a position of leadership in their tribe, and has not proven his strength to them. Konietzko deals with this fairly simply — he offers an open challenge to the tribe, daring any of their greatest warriors to face him in combat. While this gesture (on which he is most definitely taken up on) earns him some respect, he does not expect the Fenrir hold to any plan after being turned loose upon the enemy.

Glass Walkers

The Glass Walkers find themselves in a curious situation in the End Times, as they slowly realize that the very foundations on which their tribe rested might in fact have been faulty and cracked. While other tribes worried about the Glass Walkers' ties to the Weaver, it in fact is their ties with humanity that might ultimately have hurt them most — nothing humanity has yet created can help them come the Apocalypse. By focusing on the achievements of Man, the Glass Walkers neglected the spirit world. And since in the end the Apocalypse is mostly about the spirit world, few can blame the tribe of Man for feeling a little... lost. And ultimately, they act with less direction than any other tribe.

This does not mean, however, that they sit back and wait for the end. Surprised or not, they are warriors of Gaia and determined to make a difference. However, they do not act as a unified tribe, and instead fracture wildly. While the tribe as a whole follows the Margrave, less than half find their place in the Last Battle. An exceptional number fall into Harano.

The largest group files in behind Elizabeth Genereader and the Random Interrupts. Acting in coordination with the Margrave, they quickly join the coalition and make a considerable contribution to that alliance. Their communications capabilities easily outstrip any other tribe in the Garou Nation. Genereader petitions to have any security locks on GWnet removed and opened to all tribes. Servers are placed to connect GWnet to the internet proper, a drastic move that potentially exposes the Garou Nation as a whole, but one that few see as unreasonable given the circumstances. Instantly, the Garou Nation has a genuine worldwide communications network. It does not get everyone (in particular, the Red Talons are sadly unrepresented) but communication within the Nation greatly improves, giving Margrave Konietzko a medium for rapid planning and execution of strategies with his allies throughout the world. When the network falls silent, they take every weapon that works and head for the Last Battleground.

The second largest group belongs to the rising Dies Ultimae camp. And unfortunately, they do more damage than good. Their leader's already shaky mental stability is cracked by the paradoxical situation in which he finds himself: His fanatical preparation for an imminent Apocalypse was entirely justified, and yet utterly worthless. The modern combat techniques the camp specializes in are completely ineffective for Umbral combat. Their weapons of choice are inoperative. With few choices open to him and desperate for a way to assist Gaia, his already paranoid mind crumbles and he issues the camp a list of targets that includes a number of Wyrm cults, several Pentex subsidiaries, numerous perfectly normal and healthy churches and companies, and Margrave Konietzko's coalition. Some in the camp believe his anger at the Random Interrupts has affected his choice of targets, and quietly defect from the camp. Sadly, many don't, and several packs in the Margrave's alliance fall to treachery.

Many other packs, not belonging to either group, try to wend their own way through the Apocalypse. Indeed, the majority of the tribe doesn't choose sides between the other two. Some of these packs make a difference. Most don't. In a war settled in spirit, the material tribe is left behind.

Red Talons

Third among the tribes with direct connections to the Konietzko's alliance, the Red Talons are a tribe almost as well suited to fighting the Last Battle as the Get of Fenris, if not more so. An amazingly spiritual tribe thanks to their entirely lupus population, with strong warriors throughout, the Red Talons need little convincing to know now is the time to make their stand. Nine of every ten Red Talons join the coalition and fight in the Last Battle.

The tribe, however, approaches the Last Battle with a sense of great loss and grief. Notably smaller than any other tribe, the Red Talons are very much aware of the likelihood that even should the Garou emerge triumphant, the Red Talons will most likely be destroyed. As such, each sept comes to the Last Battleground in turn, after one final moot whereby they howl to Griffin one last time, and say farewell.

And then, the tribe runs to its death.

Shadow Lords

Finally ascendant above the fallen Silver Fangs, Shadow Lords around the globe lick their chops at the authority they will have in the Last Battle. And they are brutally disappointed.

Despite Konietzko's newfound position of leadership in the Garou Nation, he has no intention of favoring his own tribemates above more deserving candidates in these last frantic days. Why, he reasons, should he waste time on inferior people to organize the troops, when better choices with superior skills are available? Konietzko is fully confident in his ability to control his own tribemates should the need arise. He needs help with the others. Hence, the most trusted allies of the Margrave are not Shadow Lords, but Black Furies, Glass Walkers and Red Talons. (As well as the Silver Fangs, should the player characters be in a position to forge alliances on their behalf.) This infuriates many Shadow Lords, but these Lords are also quickly intimidated by the manifest wrath of Konietzko against any who would turn traitor in this most delicate of times. Four out of five Shadow Lords obey the orders of Konietzko, their packs fighting at the Last Battleground.

And at the Last Battleground, Konietzko personally demands that they exemplify what it means to be a warrior of Gaia. He knows that now, when the odds are stacked against them more than ever, the Garou need inspiration and faith. The best Garou that could have given this, Jonas Albrecht, is dead. It now falls to his tribe, and they had best deliver.

Silent Striders

One of the quieter tribes of the Garou Nation come Apocalypse, the Silent Striders are brought into the Margrave's coalition in two different ways. Many European Striders already had forged links to Konietzko and they bring in others of their tribe as well. Those that can't be reached from within the tribe are pulled in by outsiders like Elizabeth Genereader, who uses the Glass Walkers' computer network to contact a small percentage of the tribe and relying on word of mouth from there. Between these two sources, a stunningly high percentage of the tribe is brought on board: As many as nine out of ten Silent Striders follow the Margrave into battle.

The Silent Striders are in a unique position to bring further allies to the field. More than any other tribe, they have the respect, if not the love, of many. Not only in the Garou Nation, but their basic attitude of respect also forged links between many of their packs and the Ahadi, Beast Courts and the Fera. As a result, many of their packs do their best to recruit from outside the Garou Nation before they venture to the Last Battleground. How successful they are is up to the Storyteller to decide.

Silver Fangs

The death of King Albrecht is a crushing blow to the Silver Fangs, but not a fatal one. Kings have died before, and a warrior culture like the Garou is always prepared for that eventuality. However, the ascension of Margrave Konietzko is a blow that the Silver Fangs will likely never recover from, even should the Garou Nation survive the upcoming battle. From the dawn of time, the Silver Fangs led the Garou, and few ever seriously considered the possibility that they might not lead it in its twilight. And yet pride drives the tribe onward still. Between these two factors, seven from every ten Silver Fangs finds himself on the Last Battleground. The rest, almost to a man, fall into Harano.

Curiously enough, though, it is the Renewalist movement that take these events the hardest. King Albrecht was among those calling for renewal, so for this camp it was a double hit — not only did they lose their King, they also lost their greatest champion. To then see the Silver Fangs become second fiddle in the Garou Nation clinched it. Their movement had failed. Many in the movement succumb to Harano, others simply fall in line with the new coalition, shamed. A few attempt to spin the events positively, arguing that this can represent a final purging of the old to make way for the new, but few believe it.

By contrast, the Royalist movement is enraged by outcome of recent events. Now, when the Garou needed the wise leadership of the Silver Fangs the most, they turn around and throw millennia of brave leadership back in the Fangs' faces. And they aren't about to stand for it. Packs of Royalist Silver Fangs band together to form their own coalition and make their way to the Last Battleground. While they don't quite fit the role of loose cannons there, they nonetheless quickly gain a reputation for brutality and brilliance, and are some of the best soldiers the Garou have. As an example of everything the Silver Fangs can be, they lead their tribe into darkness proudly and with shining coats.

Uktena

More than the other tribes, the Pure Ones find themselves lost in the confusion of the Apocalypse. Konietzko's coalition is built from his power base in Europe, and while most tribes have a presence there, the Uktena barely have one, and the Wendigo don't. However, this does not mean they are entirely disconnected from it. Elizabeth Genereader's efforts at connecting the tribes together as much as possible brings in some of the American tribes, some Children of Gaia

Duties of the King

If one of the players is the new North American Silver Fang King (most likely given the Silver Crown by Albrecht moments before his death) then much of the fate of his tribe falls solely into his hands. However, he has a mammoth task ahead of him — the tribe grieving over the death of its monarch, they know that the Apocalypse is upon them, and many have given up and are mourning Gaia already. Finally, to rub salt into the wound, the Garou Nation has largely rallied around a Shadow Lord for guidance.

This is not an ideal situation for an unconventional, probably very under-experienced King. But there are options he can try to lift the tribe's spirits and rally them to Gaia's defense.

The first option is the easiest, and that is to minimize the impact of Konietzko's ascension by endorsing it officially. The Margrave is not an idiot, nor he is too proud to overlook the value of one of the most powerful of the thirteen tribes. He genuinely acts in the best interests of Gaia, and is willing to swallow his pride (though *not* his position) in order to increase his forces. Should the current King meet with Konietzko and come to a point where he agrees to allow the Silver Fangs to appoint him "the Garou Nation's military commander" or some such useful nonsense, it could help considerably. While it doesn't actually change anything, it at least provides a token sense that the Silver Fangs are really still in control. The Margrave has been chosen as the warleader now simply because he is the most capable, and he's been chosen by the Silver Fangs. Entirely false, but an immensely comforting thought to much of the tribe. Others see it for what it is remain unmoved, however.

What the tribe truly needs is a swift victory by their new King. A raid on the Five Columns, resulting in one's destruction, would be ideal for the Fangs to remain a force to be reckoned with and the *real* leaders of the Garou Nation. Other targets could also be chosen, however: Pentex has now largely been abandoned by the Wyrm as irrelevant to its goals, so the falling of a Pentex subsidiary (or at least a successful storming of their main offices) could uplift the tribe somewhat.

And, of course, there is the Margrave himself. While the Margrave is a deadly foe, should the current King be equally deadly, defeating him in single combat would completely spark the Silver Fangs, bring them out to fight, prove the Silver Fangs divine right to rule… and utterly shatter the fragile alliance the Margrave worked so hard to bring about. Is it worth it?

packs use their previous connections to bring in the Uktena and Wendigo. (And, should the players' pack have gained the Silver Crown, they may also try to bring these tribes to the fight themselves.)

However, the Uktena also have some inkling of what is happening themselves. As the Apocalypse approaches, Uktena Banetenders observe that their charges have become more restless and uncontrollable than before, and signs such as the two Red Stars hint at the truth. Some of the tribe may even still have the oral legends of the Croatan passed down, and may be able to work out what is happening from them. As a result, a large number of the Uktena make their way to the Plain of the Apocalypse, about seven from every ten. In addition, should one of the anchors be denied to the Wyrm, there is almost certainly an Uktena who knows how to perform the Croatan's ritual.

Wendigo

The Wendigo take an unusual position in the Apocalypse. While as well-suited to the Last Battle as the Get of Fenris, the peculiarities of their situation and Garou politics leaves them largely out of the primary thrust of the werewolves' response. The absence of Wendigo outside America leaves their packs in the position of third or even fourth in line to hear what's happening with the Margrave's Coalition.

And yet the Wendigo are not stupid. They too know the Umbra, can see the Red Stars, and know the Apocalypse is here. But less of their tribe knows how the other Garou are responding than in any other tribe. Word of mouth spreading from Genereader's efforts and the Uktena serve as the entirety of how the Wendigo are brought into the organized efforts already in motion. Maybe three from five Wendigo make their way to the Last Battle.

Yet a greater problem is in how they fit into the alliance. Unlike the other packs, many Wendigo packs rightfully feel that they owe no great loyalty to the Margrave. Can they be worked into an organized battle at the end?

The Plain of the Apocalypse: Storytelling the Final Battle

The Last Battle is literally everything **Werewolf** has ever been leading up to. Slowly but surely, the Garou have gathered together at the Last Battleground under Margrave Konietzko's banner. Some are not there, having chosen to instead guard their caerns to the end, or having succumbed to Harano, or having died trying to reach the Battlefield. Yards away, within the sight of every man, wolf and monster in the Nation, is an army

ten times as large, filled with blasphemous horrors and led by the gargantuan form of the Wyrm.

How Does the Apocalypse End?

The most important point of the Last Battle is how it ends, and any Storyteller running an Apocalypse game should have a fair idea of the end-game before it even begins. This doesn't mean he needs to know exactly how the story will end — now, more than ever, the players' actions should *count* in how the story resolves. But knowing the answer to a few questions in advance should give any Storyteller a lot more confidence in running any Apocalypse chronicle.

Do the Garou have a chance? The players must be given a chance to count and make a difference to the story, even as late as the Last Battle itself. But that doesn't automatically mean that they should have the chance to save the day. In fact, unless there's been a dramatic change in the Garou's favor in the days before this battle (for which there are several possibilities in the Near Realms) then they probably shouldn't. The Garou have known throughout much of their history, ever since the Prophecy of the Phoenix, that they were marching toward death. To cheat them so cheaply is actually likely to be less satisfying to the players than a steadfast journey into Apocalypse. But if they don't, then the players must both know they don't have a chance of surviving, or of saving Gaia, and they must *accept* this. Otherwise, you're guaranteed to have very angry, unsatisfied players. Give them the chance to scout the enemy. Let them talk to the Margrave, and if they ask him if they have a chance, let the Margrave be both blunt and sad: No, they don't. Conversely, if they do have a chance, *also* let them know. They should know what they can strive for here and be allowed to attempt the improbable. Make the Last Battle tough for the characters, not the players.

What are the payoffs? If there is a chance for averting Apocalypse, then this is an easy question to answer: Victory! But keep asking more questions. Refine the payoff, consider it terms of the price required. If they weaken the Wyrm by sending the Defiler back into the Deep Umbra, how many Garou need to die to bring him down regardless? Is it likely that the pack will suffer deaths as well?

But if the Apocalypse is certain by the beginning of the battle, what should the characters' goals be? Charging headlong into battle and dying gloriously is a classic staple of myth, but if you're going to do that you might as well end the game with that charge. (Which is not, actually, a terrible idea, so long as your players are satisfied with the end of the story at that point.) Do they intend to ensure they die only in the Wyrm's maw, and tear his gums in the moments before they die? Is there a particular rival, such as the Nightmaster, with whom they have a personal grudge to settle on the field of battle before the world ends? Or is the payoff even more personal? The classic story of a soldier unsure if his courage will hold works just fine in the Last Battleground, and indeed has a bittersweet beauty — since victory is impossible, the soldier can only be proven by dying bravely. Or, in a variation on the same theme and should She be present, do they want to protect Gaia to the death, throwing themselves into the jaws of death ahead of Her?

In all cases, direct tension and challenge in both dice rolls and player decisions toward this payoff. Give them hellish opponents that the characters can only just defeat by the skins of their teeth if they want a shot at the Wyrm. Make that rival as deadly and nasty as you can, and think of at least two extremely underhanded things he can do to the characters before they have to stand up once more and fight him again. Make showing courage as difficult as possible, right down to the wire. *This* is a story to let the characters face down the Wyrm. Ask for Willpower rolls, but feel free to fudge the results a little if you think you can get away with it. (In fact, if your players are sensible enough to handle the responsibility, the Last Battleground is certainly the place to just forget about the dice and let things play out as they should. This is the fulfillment of myth, don't let randomizers defeat that.) And if the players do have a shot at winning the Battle, then think of at least three wrenches to throw in the works, and use every last one. Don't let the players get away with it as they think they will — surprise them.

When does it end? Knowing when to end the story is perhaps, in fact, the most important choice of all. It makes little sense to leave the character's deaths to the dice in the Last Battleground, which imply random chance when characters should be rushing toward destiny. The Plain of the Apocalypse is Megiddo, not Omaha Beach. There are times when dice make sense (that aforementioned major rival being a good example) but there's certainly little point in forcing players to roll dice to hack apart the Banes over and over again when they should be singing epic poetry of their fierce battle instead.

So how do you determine when the story ends? Start with the payoff and then try to work out the logical ending spot from there. In the case of that villainous rival, there's little sense in continuing the game once he dies. Instead, close on the moment of the overwhelming forces gathering around the pack (or maybe even the Wyrm descending down upon them!) as they stand around the body of the rival. For the pack determined to save Gaia, use narrated combat to tell the stories of how each of the Garou fall, giving them

all chances to demonstrate their prowess in battle, or their courage, or their devotion. When only one is left, have Gaia whimper. As she holds Gaia in her arms, let her turn back to the Wyrm and his armies, snarl, and wait for their final advance.

There is rarely any value in finishing only with the death of each and every last member of the pack. (Although the pack trying to prove its own courage would certainly count.) Instead, try to find a note of poetic victory even in the darkest defeat possible, and let that note speak for the game, somber and terrible but brave.

The harder ending is, in fact, most probably the victorious one. How do you properly convey the exhilaration, relief and probably stunned disbelief the Garou would feel to actually *succeed* in defeating the Wyrm itself? And how do you show what begins afterwards? On its own, you can't. So instead, show it in perspective. Alert your players to the cost — there is no way to end the Apocalypse without tremendous loss of life. Packmates die, most packs in the Garou Nation are be obliterated. And yet... the world is alive. Everywhere, the Banes are in retreat and the surviving Gaian spirits rejoice. Let your descriptions overflow with song and color. And don't forget little touches — a single flower blooming in the gray dust can be a powerful symbol for a post-Apocalypse world.

What are the other possibilities? More than anything else, make sure you're doubly prepared. Players do weird things, but more than with any other story, you want to be ready for this one. Try to consider all angles: After all, you'll only get to do this ending once.

Tactics of the Last Battle

While the Last Battle should be a chaotic, sprawling affair as the Garou face off against sentient death for the fate of life, perpetual and unchanging combat quickly becomes boring in a Storytelling game. The Last Battle does have tactics and changing battlefield conditions that allow a Storyteller to vary the action and keep the players excited as the world comes tumbling to an end.

Goals of Battle

The Last Battle is unusual in many ways, most obviously in that the primary goal of the battle does not require the seizing of any territory. The primary goal of battle here is simply the obliteration of the enemy force. Neither side attempts to retreat; so maintaining avenues of retreat is a pointless gesture. And the Plain of the Apocalypse is flat and featureless, completely without hills or gullies that might be of value strategically. Despite all this, the battle is not without points of strategic consideration.

The first of these is the most obvious: The Five Columns of Flesh. As the mechanism by which the Wyrm brings in any reinforcements they assume tremendous strategic value. The destruction of any of the Columns hampers the Wyrm's efforts (Especially the Columns connecting to Malfeas, the Abyss, and the Atrocity Realm.)

Similarly, the Garou have a wall to their backs in the caern that borders their side of the field. While not nearly so important to the Garou as the Five Pillars to the Wyrm, the caern is an advantage that the Garou should not throw away pointlessly. Any spirit refugees harboring in this caern are still there for the final battle, and they can form a useful 'base camp' to which the wounded can be carried. Since werewolves heal so quickly, and not all of their enemies deal aggravated damage, this is no small advantage. Maintaining a strong defense of this caern could assist the Garou in maintaining a strong front.

Also of value are the two sides of the Battlefield. Since the Warring Hordes form a solid wall, any troops

What Happens if They Destroy the Big One?

If the Garou destroy the central Column of Flesh, a funny thing happens: The Plain of the Apocalypse *severs* itself in two as the Column is destroyed. No one is likely to notice, as nothing appears to happen. But from that point on, the battle in the Penumbra is completely different from the battle in the Battlefield.

As a result, the war in the Penumbra might be won, with the Garou miraculously defeating the Wyrm... and yet the war in Battlefield might be lost, creating a Realm of Apocalypse in which the Wyrm succeeded in destroying Gaia. This Realm could serve as an example to the Garou of the dangers that Gaia faces even after the Wyrm's defeat, or it could be the most dangerous thing they know, with guards forever posted outside the Realm so that nothing from within might ever escape. (Sadly, the reverse is far less likely. Even if the Wyrm did lose in Battleground, the one in the Penumbra has access to all the Banes from every other Realm, which the one in Battleground doesn't. Battleground quickly falls to the victorious Penumbral Wyrm.) This could the beginning of a new setting for your chronicle as the Garou take up their new tasks and roles set by Gaia, with a new age of the Apocalypse war beginning.

Alternatively, destroying the central Column might simply take the whole Plain into the Battlefield, destroying the links the other Column's provide in one fell swoop. Or, it might do nothing. It's the Storyteller's Choice.

there cannot be flanked. Most of the Banes ignore this, rushing forward in a mad scramble, but the werewolves on the field may prove more cunning and use careful advances along the sides of the battlefield for added security.

Surprise Attacks

While the Last Battle has an unusual formality to it, neither side is clinging to any sense of honor. The Wyrm wants nothing more than the utter destruction of the Garou Nation, the only reason it is holding back to this point is because it has a better chance of doing so easily at the Plain of the Apocalypse. The Garou see no reason to accord the Wyrm or its soldiers any fairness in battle — they know the Wyrm won't return the favor.

The Wyrm is most likely to use Nexus Crawlers for a surprise attack, using their ability to warp reality to attack the Garou before they are ready. If it works, the Garou are confused, disrupted and unable to withstand a second assault of devastating power.

The most likely way the Garou can stage a surprise attack is via the connected Wyrm Realms, entering through a moon bridge and then making an entrance onto the Last Battleground via the appropriate Column of Flesh. Not only can the Garou there make an incredible dent in the Wyrm's forces, they have the opportunity to destroy one or more of the Columns of Flesh, and deny the Wyrm any reinforcements from those connected Realms.

Storytellers who want to use a surprise attack by the Wyrm should find ways for the attack to come out of nowhere. Create a minor disturbance — something that looks like a surprise attack such as a Black Spiral Pack using Burrow or Patagia to quickly flank the Garou Nation and begin attacking. (Possibly carrying jars of Balefire for extra effect.) Play it out hard, make it seem genuine. And then, only when the players have calmed down, throw down ten Nexus Crawlers, turn the ground to silver, and rain steaming blood from the sky. And in the middle of *that*, have the Wyrm proper attack. Pile it on. Try to panic the players.

By contrast, if the players are launching a surprise attack, play up the tension. Let the Margrave himself be coordinating the strike using communication fetishes (such as Spi-Coms) or spirit allies. Repeatedly ask your players what they are doing, and make note of every last detail in their descriptions. Try to suggest to your players that they should be *obviously* doing something, without saying anything. Regardless of whether the surprise attack eventually works or not, you should be able to produce a sigh of relief from your players when it happens.

Footsoldiers and Massed Charges

At the center of the Last Battle is the massive collision of Garou (and any spirit allies they have gathered) throwing themselves headlong against the coalition of Black Spiral Dancers and Banes the Wyrm has gathered. And yet, the Last Battle isn't quite a massive brawl. While the tactics involved aren't exactly Napoleonic (and certainly aren't modern day!) there is certainly still a strong strategic element to the conflict.

Garou still attack in packs, rather than individually. While the lack of cover and flat terrain renders many pack tactics ineffectual, the basics of how werewolves fight still applies. The Wyrm is aware that despite having Banes available that dwarf werewolves in size, the strong pack bonds makes them not nearly so formidable as he might hope. As a result, the Wyrm also needs to create tactics that nullify the pack advantage. The easiest way to do this is with massive numbers: The Wyrm swarms the Garou pack with massed units of Scrags or Wyrm Elementals. Even massed, they're little match for most Garou, but they break apart pack tactics and consume the individual efforts of the werewolves. After this, a larger Bane (such as a Nexus Crawler or a group of Midnight Shadows) attacks the divided pack, catching it off guard. This tactic is exceedingly effective, so the Garou try to counter it by pairing up packs — if one pack becomes hideously overrun, the second pack breaks away and watches for the second threat. The only problem with this is that the Garou are horribly outnumbered, and as a result it's remarkably easy for the second pack to become likewise overwhelmed, and then wait for a single monster to take out *both* of them…

Black Spiral Dancers (and the Vo'lag, if the giants from the Appendix are being used) likewise form part of this basic tactical approach. Any pack that begins to quickly beat the "mass rush/big guy" combination soon confronts a pack of Black Spirals to take them on hand to hand.

The Wyrm also applies other tactics, using the powers of particular Banes to its advantage. Should a group of packs begin to cut through the enemy lines, the Wyrm may send a single Scrag, infected with Gray Masses (**Book of the Wyrm**, pg. 121), to the advancing troops, which drops dead in front of them, scattering the troops as the rush of possessing fungi washes over them. Nexus Crawlers can be used to carve out trenches and otherwise hinder any Garou advance. The Wyrm, in effect, has the advantage of being on the defensive for this battle and his troops are well equipped to take that advantage.

Storytellers should keep in mind these tactics and develop others to throw at the characters during the battle. Don't just keep moving the next warrior into position — eventually, your game will become mind numbingly boring. Instead, mix it up a bit. Create that wave of tiny Banes and then pound your players with the big guy, showing them what the Wyrm's tactics are

meant to do, and then let it level out a bit into a field of different Banes. Then, when they get swamped the second time, you can get your players waiting for the other shoe to drop. (And, on a third try, hit them with a massive wave of small banes, and see if they correlate this with a really *massive* Bane about to attack.)

Let your players make runs into enemy territory, only to be flooded by Gray Masses. Give them enough rope to hang themselves with, and if they're going to go down in a sea of enemies, find ways to make that sea of enemies have to *work* to beat them, as opposed to just piling on. It's always far more satisfying to realize you played right into their hands than it is to just be brutally crushed.

The Big Guns — Incarnae and Monsters

Both sides have allies that dwarf the average rank and file soldiers: The Garou possibly have Pangaea (as the Elder Serpent) or Rorg on their side waiting to deliver furious fire or raining asteroid spirits down upon their enemies, while the Wyrm may have the four monsters of the Flux Realm or the Nightmaster (in his fifth and most devastating form) ready to stride among and slay the pure. The totem spirits of both sides clash, Fenris versus Green Dragon, tribal totems versus Maeljin Incarnae. And, of course, the united Triatic Wyrms themselves are barely containing their Rage and desire to enter the battle.

If the Garou *don't* have some incredibly powerful spirit ally backing them up, then their chances of winning the Last Battle are practically nil, no matter what other advantages they have. The value of having either Rorg or the Elder Serpent is primarily in pinning the Wyrm to his spot above the Five Columns of Flesh. Should he leave that spot to wreak havoc upon his armies, soon afterward a massive asteroid flattens where he once was, and suddenly his reserves in the Near Realms can no longer enter the Plain of the Apocalypse. If neither of these allies (or some similar allies) are at the Last Battlefield, then the Wyrm charges from his waiting point and dives upon the Garou. Acid drips from his underbelly, balefire from his mouth and eyes. *Hundreds* of Garou can die with each swoop, and the Last Battle is most probably over very quickly indeed.

But if the Garou have Incarna allies, then the battle becomes more interesting. The Wyrm, while capable of wreaking massive destruction upon all, is in a position where he must suffer tremendous losses to do so. Even if he were prepared to lose the Five Columns

of Flesh (which he might be), his movement would quickly spark an equally horrible loss among his own troops, either from the Elder Serpent's fiery breath or asteroids striking down from high in the heavens. Ultimately, however, the balance favors the Wyrm. Rorg has proven that he cannot harm the Wyrm (although he might *just* be able to should the Garou banish the Defiler to the Deep Umbra again), and if all the Garou and Banes alike die, the end result still favors the Wyrm. Gaia is more or less defenseless, and the Wyrm still has thousands of Banes running amok throughout the Penumbra, *and* more are constantly being born in the Atrocity Realm.

The creatures from the Flux Realm and the Nightmaster, however, are almost certain to be involved in combat from the beginning. In both cases they, and the Garou's counterparts, are walking forces of death on the battlefield, slicing through the enemy's soldiers and strategies like butter. (Very little strategy is going to stop an asteroid-spirit.) Unlike the Wyrm, however, they *can* be brought down by the Garou themselves. Storytellers can use this as a punctuation in the Last Battle, or as a minor victory in a massive defeat.

Another way to use these titans of the Last Battle is as an explosive opening. If the characters have not managed to find any advantages before reaching the Last Battlefield, then there could be fewer darker ways to go out then charging forward... and watching in horror as the Wyrm destroys the entire Garou Nation in a few short moments. As long as the players know what is happening and are okay with it, then it would make a sad, but explosive, end to the world. On a smaller scale, a battlefield filled with asteroid-spirits exploding and massive monsters tearing apart people everywhere would make for a dramatic opening to combat before closing in on the players in order to allow them actually make a difference.

Finally, some clever players might find ways to strategically use the big guns. If they do so, encourage such creative thinking by letting it *work*.

Starting the Last Battle

Less important than how to end it, but still worth thought. Give the players time to have their characters speak their peace, resolve conflicts with rivals (or refuse, even into death, to let them rest) and show their characters preparing themselves for the final cataclysm. Stay hands off, just giving a few gentle nudges by bringing old characters back into view. Remember, practically the entire Garou Nation is here — any other werewolf they have reason to love or hate is going to be here too.

When the players are ready to begin the battle, have the Margrave deliver his speech to the Nation, and then charge into history.

"Know this, warriors of our Mother! There is nothing after this. Our ancestors have been butchered twice over, once in body and once in spirit. There is no Heaven, there will be no Hell, Valhalla does not exist. All that is will be destroyed if we fall today. And many of you will. The enemy is mighty and fearsome, and we march forward into the mouth of death. Do not fight for an afterlife reward for your bravery, for it will not come. Fight instead for Gaia. Fight for all that you know and love. Fight with every last ounce of Rage left inside of you, so that even should the Wyrm destroy us, he will be awestruck by your mighty fury. Prove your arms so mighty, prove your anger so terrible, prove your love so pure and your passion so encompassing, prove your minds so resourceful and your zeal and courage so overwhelming that even should every one of us fall today, the armies of the Wyrm will never rest easy. In their reign of Oblivion, every one of their soldiers will look over their shoulders and sleep with one eye open. They will live with fear — fear that one day, *we will find a way back*!"

A Tribe Falls

Every normal man must be tempted, at times, to spit on his hands, hoist the black flag, and begin slitting throats.
— H.L. Mencken

In this scenario, a tribe falls into the Wyrm's service. This betrayal leads to a civil war of sorts within the Garou Nation, as the tribes loyal to Gaia must defend themselves against former allies while still protecting Gaia Herself from the forces of the Wyrm. The Apocalypse comes from within.

This scenario has the potential to be the most personal of the Apocalypse scenarios described in this book, but its sweep can be just as epic as any of the others. In fact, it's easy to fold a tribal fall element in with pieces of other scenarios to build an Apocalypse that meets your chronicle's needs precisely. Of course, it also takes more work; the Apocalypse begins and ends in a different fashion depending on which tribe falls, and of course there's the need to fine-tune the tribe so that the Fall seems more plausible.

It is strongly recommended that the Storyteller have access to the revised Tribebook of the tribe that falls to the Wyrm. Many of the scenarios below touch on plot points described in more detail in the revised Tribebooks, and even for those that don't, the fundamental makeup of the tribe as described and clarified in the Tribebook is an invaluable resource. The Tribebook isn't necessary, but it will certainly help flesh out the doomed tribe appropriately.

Details of the Fall

How does the tribe itself fall? There are several options to choose from.

• Individual tribe members walk (or are driven) down the Black Spiral. This may seem like it's violating the Dancers' copyright or something — perhaps a new-fallen tribe has its own path for individuals to take to corruption. But the idea is the same: A werewolf has to be brought to a particular location and go through a ritual in order to join the forces of the Wyrm. This scheme has weaknesses that savvy Garou can take advantage of: If they can find the location being used, they might be able to destroy it, or at least keep others from being brought into it. As the White Howlers learned to their detriment, going to the location of a Pit to the Wyrm might simply accelerate a tribe's fall. If this is the method by which the tribe falls, many Garou of the tribe can avoid the fall through simple physical expedients. Avoid capture or persuasion, and you can avoid corruption.

recognize that something ominous has taken place, though the signs may not clearly point out exactly what did happen.

At this point, the tribe probably has so much momentum toward the Wyrm that there isn't much that ordinary Garou can do to stop its fall, but if you're interested in allowing the troupe's pack to change things, this would be a good point to do so, exposing the Wyrm-taint of the elders of the tribe (or the incipient corruption of the tribe's totem) and halting the fall in its tracks. That leads you not into an Apocalypse story but into an averted-Apocalypse story, which might not be what you want. See "Resolution," below, for more on the aftermath of an averted tribal fall.

The fall of a tribe is a relatively rapid thing. While no living Garou knows how long it took the White Howlers to fall, surely it was less than a generation. And on the eve of the Apocalypse, the Wyrm's chief minions have no interest in waiting around for a tribe to saunter into their service. No, in the age of the Apocalypse, no tribal fall takes more than half a year.

Covert Activity

Certain tribes may spend weeks, months, or even years with their heads down, not yet revealing to the other tribes that they're in the service of the Wyrm. They may be extending their reach in some fashion, or they may be hunting down rogue tribe members who haven't yet turned.

If the tribe spends time acting covertly after its fall, its members may receive Wolf Skins (see the Appendix). These fetishes protect their wearers from the Gift: Sense Wyrm, but they only last a relatively short time (they crumble to dust after a few weeks to a few months). They are the Wyrm's way of giving the fallen tribe a little breathing room while also giving them a ticking clock.

This is a time of great urgency for the fallen tribe. They have an enormous opportunity to strike from surprise, but they must swiftly quell any internal opposition, lest those traitors loyal to Gaia reveal the tribe's subversion. During this period, as a result, expect the deaths of many Garou at the hands of mysterious werewolves who give every indication of being Black Spiral Dancers.

The troupe's pack may be called upon to investigate these murders. That investigation could be the first time that the pack encounters evidence of the Wyrm's tentacles deep into a Gaian tribe.

Revealed!

Eventually too many factors pile up to enable the fallen tribe to hide its existence from the rest of the Garou Nation. Powerful spirits may reveal the tribe's corruption to other Garou, or a single event could occur that draws everyone's attention to the fallen tribe.

Open Warfare

No two tribes wage war identically. Some engage in open assault on Gaian positions, while others set up screens to defend their mystics while the mystics work to corrupt Gaian spirits and caerns. Others may attempt to influence powerful spirits to wreak destruction on the face of the world.

Tribal Fall and Totem Spirits

A fallen tribe's totem has one of several fates. First, the totem spirit itself could fall into the service of the Wyrm (or the Weaver). The spirit could become deluded, trapped and poisoned, or deliberately join the Wyrm's side. In fact, the spirit's fall might be the cause of its tribe's fall. Of the tribal totem spirits, the ones most likely to end up on the Wyrm's side seem to be Grandfather Thunder, Griffin, Great Uktena, and Great Wendigo, but there's almost no tribal totem spirit that is *immune* to a fall.

The tribe might simply abandon its totem spirit and adopt a new Wyrmish totem. This is what happened with the White Howlers when they became the Black Spiral Dancers, after all. A tribal totem holds much of its power by virtue of its close tie to a tribe of Garou. If a totem spirit were to lose the devotion of its tribe it would decrease in power, eventually becoming little more than a potent Jaggling in Luna's service, or attaching itself to the brood of another tribal Incarna and serving as a greatly-diminished patron to the surviving packs that still follow it. A tribal Incarna that loses that much power also loses many of the Jagglings and Gafflings that serve it as pack totems. A Storyteller might justifiably hint at an ongoing tribal fall by providing a non-Silent Strider pack of Owl that has lost touch with its pack totem, for instance.

Tribal totem spirits are not indestructible. The forces of any one of the Triat could destroy a tribe's totem. If the tribe has already abandoned its totem, then it is particularly vulnerable to attack, but even healthy totem spirits with intact tribes are vulnerable to a concerted attack. A concerted attack on a tribal Incarna by dark spirits, corrupted sorcerers and fallen Garou could well lead to that spirit's demise.

Each tribal Incarna has three primary vulnerabilities. Arguably each of these vulnerabilities is a source of strength for the Incarna as well, but when the Wyrm or Weaver is interested in destroying a tribal Incarna, these vulnerabilities are targets. A simultaneous attack on more than one of these vulnerabilities could cripple or destroy the Incarna.

The Incarna's Jaggling servants are its first source of weakness. Such servants act as the Incarna's advisors, eyes and ears. Many of the Incarna's most power-

• A wave of Wyrm influence spreads through the tribe from werewolf to werewolf, infecting like a disease. Perhaps pack totems become infected and pass the taint on to Garou that exchange Gnosis with them, or Garou that regain Rage in the presence of a corrupted packmate find their new Rage energies to have been corrupted by the Wyrm. Resilient Gaian Garou might be able to avoid corruption by expelling or containing corrupted Gnosis or Rage, but it will take time to develop a technique for doing this consistently. Werewolves who want to avoid this fate must avoid all contact with their former tribemates, just to be safe. Storytellers who use this method of corruption should decide whether Garou of other tribes are vulnerable, and if not, why not.

• A supernatural wave of corruption sweeps through the tribe, powered by the Wyrm itself or one of its most powerful Triatic minions. The Wyrm might corrupt the tribe's totem, and through the link between the totem and all its children sweep outward. Garou of the targeted tribe have little hope to escape the corruption. Fate, it would seem, would have them fall to the Wyrm. If it's instantaneous, there's no real defense (unless some werewolves catch an omen and build mystical protections, which might or might not hold). If it takes even a few days, however, there might be a chance for a Garou to protect himself. He could build a mystical ward (and hope that the effect fades after the rest of the tribe has fallen); he could hide in the far reaches of the Umbra, hoping the effect can't reach him; or he could undergo the Rite of Renunciation, leaving his old tribe behind and petitioning a new totem spirit for adoption.

This last is a fairly brutal option, if there are members of the fallen tribe in the troupe. They *will fall*, unless they take drastic action. Use that last option carefully; foreshadow it and build the suspense rather than just snapping your fingers, or else it's a lot like *deus ex machina* and as such breaks players' suspension of disbelief.

Tribal Fall Elements

Every tribal fall story involves a common set of elements. The short version of the story is that a given tribe becomes corrupted by the Wyrm, falls to it, betrays the Garou Nation and Gaia to the Wyrm, and brings about the Apocalypse, ending the world as the Garou know it.

No two tribes experience this fall in quite the same fashion. One might lurk in the service of the Wyrm for years, slowly plotting and planning, while another could fall and take the fight to the Garou Nation within a matter of weeks. One tribe might fall almost by accident, while another could decide that the Wyrm's side is the only one worth standing on. While the broad scope may look similar for each tribe, each tribe causes the Apocalypse to spin somewhat differently, and a Storyteller should expect to put his own unique stamp on what happens.

The elements listed below are only some of the possible points to consider when creating your own tribal fall story. The examples that follow touch on every one of these points, however.

Foreshadowing

Plot out the activities that a tribe's leadership (or other influential members) takes that lead it to be corrupted by the Wyrm. This motivation guides the rest of the tribe's activities. The tribe might be tricked into falling — led into a cavern that turns out to echo the Black Spiral, for instance. They might find some other threat that they consider to be even worse than the Wyrm, driving them into the arms of the Wyrm out of desperation. Or the tribe could turn to the Wyrm out of a cold calculation that the Apocalypse has already begun and the Wyrm's side is the one most likely to win.

A Storyteller can also foreshadow a tribe's fall with mystic or spiritual signs and symbolism. Jagglings related to the tribe's totem might become agitated or hard to find, or they might act in strange, previously unseen ways — the impending fall of the Fianna might lead to visions of ordinary deer-spirits seen with blood on their muzzles, for instance.

Foreshadowing doesn't have to be purely spiritual, either. A pack of Garou on an adventure entirely unrelated to the impending Apocalypse might encounter an apartment building that's been entirely cordoned off by the city and exterminators — "Totally infested with rats; we might have to just burn the place down." Encountering Black Spiral Dancers formerly of the tribe about to fall is another good hook to throw into the troupe's path.

The reason for the fall should be epic in nature. Tribes do not fall to the Wyrm for lack of hot coffee, nor (more seriously) for losing a single caern or fetish. The cause should be something that would greatly affect the tribe as a whole even if the tribe did *not* fall.

The First Step

What step, precisely, does the tribe take that enters it into the Wyrm's service? This should be a specific thing — a point beyond which no sane person can claim that the tribe does not serve the Wyrm, even if some individual members do not.

This could be a great ritual conducted by tribal elders, a field trip through the Black Spiral, a pilgrimage to Malfeas, or a dozen other things. It is a dramatic event, with repercussions throughout the physical and spiritual worlds. No one with a Gnosis above 2 fails to

Fallen to the Weaver

The default assumption throughout this chapter is that the fallen tribe succumbs to the wiles of the Wyrm. For hundreds of years the Garou have defined the Wyrm as their primary foe, a stance reflected in werewolf deed names (Wyrmfoe, etc.) as well as the thrust of many Gifts and rites.

Within the last half-century, though, it has become more obvious to the Garou that the Weaver, and her madness, are at least as big a threat to Gaia as the Wyrm is. The Wyrm is the rampaging monster; the Weaver is the more cunning foe that has nevertheless taken the lead in the race. For more on this in general terms, see Chapter Four, *Weaver Ascendant*.

But nearly any of the tribes that fall to the Wyrm herein might fall to the Weaver instead. The Wyrm wants to foment chaos and destruction in order to drag Gaia to Her doom and restart the universe. The Weaver, by contrast, wants to push Gaia into stasis. So while the Wyrm targets a tribe to fall in order to cause the maximum disruption to the Garou Nation and to Gaia's spirit hierarchy, the Weaver targets a tribe to fall in order to calm the Garou Nation down, to smooth out uncontrolled ripples in the spirit world. In many cases, the Weaver's greatest concern is the unmanaged chaos of the Wyld.

Therefore, the fall of a Garou tribe to the Weaver probably causes less chaos overall than a fall to the Wyrm, unless the Garou Nation becomes aware that the Weaver is killing Gaia and chooses to take decisive action. Here's a quick look at how and why the Weaver might target each of the Twelve Tribes.

• **Black Furies:** The Furies are one of the Garou tribes most closely aligned with the Wyld. The Weaver therefore attempts to sway them to her side in order to minimize the influence of the Wyld on the Twelve Tribes as a whole. Due to the Furies' tribal structure — leadership of which is partly determined at *random* in honor of the Wyld — and general dedication to the Wyld, pulling them into the Weaver's camp could take a generation.

• **Bone Gnawers:** If the Weaver were to target the Bone Gnawers, it would suggest that it already considered the Glass Walkers to be in its camp, and wished to consolidate control of the cities by swaying both *urrah* tribes. It shouldn't take a terribly long time to grab the Bone Gnawers; they are, after all, suckers for cool Stuff.

• **Children of Gaia:** The Weaver appeals to the Children of Gaia through their love of peace, stability, and order. If the Weaver dominated the Triat (more than it already does) it could guarantee an absence of disease, chaos, disorder — and even, possibly, death. The Weaver targets the Children because they are one of the larger tribes, and provide a great deal of logistical and medical support to the others; a push to subvert the Children of Gaia suggests that the Weaver intends to go to war with the other eleven tribes.

• **Fianna:** A healthy distrust of the Weaver is built into the tribe's traditions, but the Weaver might infect the Fianna through song. Music is itself a sort of memetic virus (try getting the most infectious song you know out of your head), and Weaver-tainted music provides a mix of complexity and repetition that is difficult to ignore or avoid. Why target the Fianna? The Fianna created the Garou language, and language is another Weaver tool. Symbolically speaking (and the Weaver is never *not* symbolically speaking), control of a language's creator should give some control of the language itself; the Weaver may use the Garou tongue to bring all Twelve Tribes into line.

• **Get of Fenris:** The reason to subjugate the Get of Fenris is obvious: they are Gaia's most ferocious warriors. Any successful war plan against the rest of Gaia's defenders must neutralize the Get of Fenris in particular. Thankfully, from the Weaver's perspective, the Get are not known for their savvy; they might well be "bought off" with useful high-technology fetishes and talens, particularly those that improve their users' combat abilities. Unlike the Glass Walkers, the Fenrir distrust cybernetic implants and reject those as options… at least at first. After they've really fallen to the Weaver all bets are off.

• **Glass Walkers:** What, you mean the Glass Walkers haven't already fallen to the Weaver? Really, this one is such an obvious choice that it almost isn't worth making. It's too predictable.

• **Red Talons:** The Red Talons reject the Weaver and all her works. Scenarios involving a Red Talon fall to the Weaver are less likely than any other tribe's fall listed here, and should involve an extraordinarily lengthy or complex plot in order to avoid shattering players' suspension of disbelief. The Weaver might target the Talons for the same reason it would target the Black Furies, above: Swinging your most dedicated enemy over to your side makes the rest of the war easy.

• **Shadow Lords:** Given that the Shadow Lords are one of the most dominant tribes politically, turning them to its side would give the Weaver a lot of influence within the Garou Nation. It might be argued that Konietzko's Balkan alliance is a reflection of the Weaver's interest in the Shadow Lords, as

the great spirit subtly guides lines of communication to connect and interweave tribal interests.

• **Silent Striders:** The Silent Striders provide secure long-distance communication for most septs. A subtle corruption of this tribe would also enable the Weaver to control the net of moon bridges that interconnect various caerns. The Striders could most easily be swayed to the Weaver's side in return (or gratitude) for the destruction of Set and the end of the tribe's Egyptian curse.

• **Silver Fangs:** The Silver Fangs are another obvious target. Given the number of Garou who really do owe fealty to the Fangs, it only makes sense for the Weaver's minions to target it for a fall. How to get them? Perhaps in much the same way as the Silver Fangs/Fiery Crown fall to the Wyrm described elsewhere in this chapter. Provide the Fangs with a ritual that can overcome their tribal weakness and help them to stabilize their collective personality problems and they may choose to serve out of gratitude. Failing that, the Weaver might well build some safeguards into the ritual itself.

• **Uktena:** The Uktena tribe is the traditional keeper of hidden and forbidden Wyrm lore among the Garou. If the Uktena could be turned to the service of the Weaver, they would become techno-shamans, urban primitives most unlike the Glass Walkers. They would also provide the Weaver with a fantastic poker hand; if the Garou Nation were to assault the Weaver's forces directly, the fallen Uktena could easily cause chaos in the ranks by unleashing powerful Banes. The Uktena would be best turned through judicious trades of rites and fetishes.

• **Wendigo:** Finally, Great Wendigo represents the spirit of the world after the Weaver is done with it. Cold, hard, unchanging and bitter — the icy reaches of the far north would spread to cover the world if the Weaver could have its way. Accordingly, the Great Wendigo spirit would be one way for the Weaver to extend its web into the Garou Nation.

For a really unpleasant Apocalypse, the Storyteller might consider having multiple tribes fall to the Weaver at once, or have one tribe fall to the Weaver at the same time another falls to the Wyrm.

ful Jagglings serve Garou as pack totem spirits. Not all of these Jagglings directly represent the Incarna — for instance, Pegasus's brood includes the Muses, the Gorgons, Themis, and many other spirits.

An attack on a totem's Jagglings could include deluding or attacking the totem's influential advisors; ambushing and destroying its most able scouts; and charming or poisoning the totem's most effective warrior-spirits. Such a multi-pronged attack would almost certainly include a spiritual and physical assault on Garou packs dedicated to the totem. Slowly, then, the totem Incarna loses its best advice, its best protectors, and its best sources of information, leaving it blind, clueless, and weak — easy pickings for a direct assault.

The Incarna's second weakness is its symbolic nature. Spirits are only partly independent of the physical world that the Umbra reflects. To some degree, every spirit represents a real thing, and each of these most ancient tribal Incarnae have layers of symbolism laid on top of them. Certainly Great Fenris may once have simply represented the Wolf, but since then he has taken on aspects of the Untamable Foe, sheer Ferocity, and a complex relationship with the Wyrm-spirit Jormungandr and the trickster Loki. Going farther we might investigate the symbolism surrounding Fenris' snapping off Tyr's hand, look at Fenris' role in Nazi mythology, or expand the Wolf symbol into a host of other references.

Each of these symbols gives the Incarna power in the form of Gnosis as humans, Garou, and others invest the symbol with the power of belief. However, the symbols work both ways: A cunning foe of the Incarna can unleash dark magic upon the spirit by assaulting its representations. Thus Great Wendigo might lose some of its power if too much of Hudson Bay thaws early in the year (thanks to global warming or less subtle weather-magics); and Falcon loses a little of its grandeur every time another European monarch dies unlamented.

Symbolically, a totem spirit is also intimately tied to each of its Garou children. Any werewolf that a totem Incarna adopts into its tribe is a symbolic link to the totem spirit. Every Garou death is a little chink in the Incarna's armor, and every cub adopted is a new source of pride and power. There are hundreds of Garou in each tribe, which means that the link between the totem and any given werewolf isn't an enormous conduit of spiritual energy. Because of this, a dark ritualist cannot perform a ritual on a single werewolf that would bring terrible harm to her tribal totem. However, if enough Garou of a single tribe were to be brought together and targeted with a hostile ritual (such as the Rite of the Vengeful Spider, see p. 198), or slain in a great battle, the tribe's totem spirit would surely lose a great deal of power.

After a Totemic Assault

If the forces of the Wyrm target a tribal Incarna first, then one of four results occurs. Either the Garou manage to fight off the assault and the Incarna survives unharmed — in which case carry on with your chronicle and put down this book, the Apocalypse has been forestalled again — or the Incarna meets a dark fate: death, dormancy, or fall to the Weaver or Wyrm.

If the Incarna is killed, its tribe is rudderless. The tribe might simply scatter, approaching other tribes of Garou (and their totems) for adoption. Unicorn is well-known for its propensity to adopt wayward Garou; the ranks of the Children of Gaia might swell after such an event, but other tribal totems would also accept certain refugees — Uktena would gladly adopt the Native American children of a dead Wendigo, and vice versa. Pegasus might be happy to adopt females of other tribes, or Griffin would take lupus Garou. Whippoorwill gladly adopts any Garou that approaches it for succor.

A tribe with no surviving totem spirit cannot adopt new members, nor can its members learn Gifts from Jaggling or Gaffling avatars of the totem. Jaggling pack totems of that Incarna become listless, distracted, and lose half their Gnosis. Garou of a tribe with no totem spirit cannot gain Rank, and are more prone than their brethren to enter Harano. The tribe's Umbral Homeland becomes unstable and chaotic. For all these reasons, it is imperative that the tribe finds a new totem.

The elders of a totem-less tribe may gather together and beseech a new Incarna to shepherd them through this difficult time — they may even approach a Celestine for direct intervention, though such assistance would surely require a complex and dangerous quest, oath of service, and great chiminage. Different camps may advocate different Incarnae as the tribe's new totem, and even the Jaggling pack totems of particularly powerful packs may be put forth as alternatives. At the Storyteller's discretion, the tribe itself might have no choice in the matter. One powerful spirit may simply claim the totem role for the tribe in such a fashion that other spirits cannot gainsay it, or there might be a purely spirit-based struggle in the tribe's Umbral Homeland as different Incarna and powerful Jagglings contest to take the tribe's leadership.

Days among a totem-less tribe would be politically and spiritually charged even if the Wyrm or Weaver weren't using the totem's destruction to kick off the Apocalypse. Incarna of the Wyrm are drawn to a totem-less tribe like demagogues to a riot. If the decision of new tribal totem spirit is to be made by the Garou leadership of the tribe, then Wyrm Incarnae conceal their true natures and attempt to seduce the tribe's decision-makers. If instead the tribe's totem is to be determined purely within the spiritual realm, then the Wyrmish host might even cooperate to place one of its own atop one of Gaia's tribes.

A tribe whose totem spirit is simply dormant finds itself in limbo. The totem's servitor spirits suffer relatively minor ill effects and most take on a more mournful aspect. Garou of that tribe can still gain Rank, but the tribe can adopt no new members. The totem Incarna eventually emerges from this dormant state; Theurges might be able to assess the length (a spiritually significant period, such as a full month, a year and a day, or thirteen years).

If the totem falls into the service of the Weaver or Wyrm, tribe members with a Gnosis of 4 or higher

Totem Symbolism

To get the juices flowing, here are some things symbolically linked to each of the twelve totem spirits of the Western Concordat. Any of them could come under assault directly or indirectly by foes of Gaia.

Cockroach (Glass Walkers): Most ground-bound insects; nuclear power and radiation; Kafka; filth and squalor.

Falcon (Silver Fangs): European nobility; sports teams with a "Falcons" mascot; the F-16 fighter plane; falconers; urban hunters.

Fenris (Get of Fenris): The Untamable Foe; people getting their hands bitten or cut off; the Big Bad Wolf; snapped chains or leashes; possibly even Kerberos.

Grandfather Thunder (Shadow Lords): Thunderstorms and tornadoes (Tornado Alley); Thor; crows (Stormcrows); Hungary; electricity and electrical power plants.

Great Uktena (Uktena): Rivers; snakes; mongrels

Great Wendigo (Wendigo): Cold; ice; cannibalism; the winter wind; Hudson Bay; the Inuit.

Griffin (Red Talons): The Devouring Monster; Lowenbrau beer; royalty; Rome; Christ

Owl (Silent Striders): The Underworld; Athena (and thereby wisdom); the moon; nocturnal messengers (and maybe even the Internet).

Pegasus (Black Furies): The Umbra; freedom in captivity; poetry; the Muses; the Gorgons.

Rat (Bone Gnawers): Mazes; scientific labs; poverty; cowardice; desperation; corporations (the "rat race"); pigeons; garbage.

Stag (Fianna): Masculine fertility; the hunt; forests; the Horned God.

Unicorn (Children of Gaia): Rhinoceros; the Caduceus; Virgins; mercury.

immediately experience dark images of foreboding. Those with Gifts that provide prophetic powers, or using rites intended to aid the senses, receive twisted and corrupt omens. Jagglings and Gafflings in service of the totem Incarna immediately fall into the Wyrm's service, though that might not be immediately obvious.

Not every fallen totem follows an identical path, but most perform the same general sweep of actions:

• **Corrupt the Children.** There are several simple ways to corrupt Garou, from the perspective of a tribal totem gone bad. A good way to rapidly turn Garou to the Wyrm is to feed them corrupt Gnosis. A cunning totem knows when its packs hunt spirits for Gnosis, and makes sure to have subtly corrupted Gafflings and Jagglings fall into the pack's path. More violent and less subtle totems may choose to use the werewolves' Rage against them. Present a Garou with enough opportunities to frenzy and sooner or later either he'll do something awful and regrettable during the frenzy, or be pushed into the Thrall of the Wyrm. A Totem of War might have an unusual aptitude for affecting a werewolf's Rage in this regard.

• **Target the Leadership.** The totem starts by corrupting the highest Ranking members of the tribe. For ease of access (and concealment) it begins with those Garou who are members of packs dedicated to it (if Stag falls it goes after high-ranking Fianna in Stag packs first). Subsequently it spreads its influence, reaching out for high-ranking Garou of its tribe who are not members of its packs, and then members of its packs of all ranks, and finally low-ranking Garou with other pack totems.

• **Provide Tainted Magic.** While the charm offensives listed above are going on, the totem might well begin to provide its more vulnerable — "trusted" — Theurges and Philodox with new versions of old rituals, fetishes, and Gifts. These new versions rely on Wyrm spirits rather than Gaian spirits, but that may not be immediately obvious.

• **More complex schemes.** The totem might lay down a lengthy plan designed to maneuver the tribe's leadership into turning to the Wyrm for aid and succor, and use that trap to drag the entire tribe into Hell. Some of the twelve "tribal scenarios" that follow later in this chapter use this exact scheme; steal from their examples or simply use them as inspiration.

Maeljin Incarnae as Fallen Totems

The Maeljin Incarnae — the Wyrm Incarnae who act as the incarnate will of the Urge Wyrms — are the Wyrm spirits most likely to act as patrons to a fallen Garou tribe. Certain Maeljin Incarnae are more likely than others to take over as totems of fallen Garou tribes; certain Maeljin Incarnae would also be more at home with some tribes than with others. The following list is by no means complete — Storytellers are free to use any of the Maeljin Incarnae from **Book of the Wyrm** however they see fit in this regard, or invent their own Wyrm Incarnae to act as totem spirits for fallen Gaian tribes.

• **Lady Aife (Angu, the Urge of Cruelty):** Twisting the Children of Gaia into torturers and sadists would bring Lady Aife no end of cold pleasure. Other tribes have suffered so greatly over time that Aife would find their pain particularly delicious — tribes such as the Red Talons, Silent Striders, Black Furies, Uktena, and Wendigo could all easily (to Aife's mind) be perverted to inflict pain rather than bear it.

• **Hellbringer (Ba'ashkai, the Urge of Violence):** All of the most violent tribes would bring a cruel glee to the eyes of Hellbringer, and most of the others would bring him joy as well. Hellbringer might well compete with Lady Aife for the privilege of corrupting the Children of Gaia, but he believes that the Get of Fenris, Red Talons, Shadow Lords, or Wendigo would all make fine servants as well.

• **Maine duBois (Pseulak, the Urge of Lies):** Tribes that traffic in lies have danced near duBois as long as he has existed. He might well be able to convince the Garou that Gaia had already died (a lie some Silent Striders are said to believe already). DuBois might be able to twist the deceivers among the Garou — a group including the Glass Walkers, Bone Gnawers, Shadow Lords, and Fianna — or he might deceive and tempt the more earnest tribes into falling.

• **Doge Klypse (Sykora, the Urge of Paranoia):** Doge Klypse's master is Paranoia — not quite pain, deceit, or despair, but a braid of all three. The Silver Fangs represent Klypse's preferred target; were he given the reins of the Apocalypse, so to speak, he would ride the Silver Fangs into Malfeas and pull the rest of Creation after them. Klypse would use less energy competing with the other Malfean Incarna for the hand of another Garou tribe, but his innate brilliance might push him to succeed even for a secondary target.

• **The Nameless Angel of Despair (Gree, the Urge of Despair):** Despair is the dark angel of suicides. She extends her purple fingertips whenever any Garou succumbs to Harano, regardless of whether the Garou falls all the way to suicide. It's anyone's guess which tribe feels the most desperation these days as a group. The Bone Gnawers lead desperate lives from day to day; the Uktena have always drawn from among the downtrodden; the Wendigo, Silver Fangs and Fianna suffer from Harano more than most other tribes do.

• **Knight Entropy (Khaaloobh, the Urge of Consumption):** Several Garou tribes have camps — or at least contingents — that believe the consump-

tion of manflesh to be a sacrament of sorts. The Silent Striders, the Wendigo, the Red Talons, and the Bone Gnawers all harbor cannibals. While Knight Entropy is more a destroyer than a cannibal, his master Khaaloobh holds sway over cannibals. Under Knight Entropy's command, a fallen tribe would become a terrible gang of devourers, slaying their enemies and ritually absorbing the strength of their consumed flesh.

...And The Black Spiral Dancers

Whichever tribe falls to the Wyrm, it won't be alone in its service. The White Howlers fell to the Wyrm, many centuries ago, becoming the Black Spiral Dancers. The relationship between the fallen tribe and the Dancers could be crucial to an Apocalypse chronicle.

Joining the Dancers

The fallen tribe could simply join the brood of Whippoorwill, greatly increasing the size of the Black Spiral Dancer tribe. This is the simplest option, though it does raise the question of the fate of the tribe's original totem (see the previous section for some suggestions along these lines). Packs of the fallen tribe would either join Dancer packs or form intact packs of their own. Certainly these new members of the Black Spiral Dancers would be less prone to inbred madness and hereditary taint. This might lower their esteem in the eyes of the other Dancers, but also make them more capable of infiltrating human and Garou society without being noticed. It also might allow them to make more sophisticated plans than the average Black Spiral Dancer can, giving Gaian Garou more pain than they had reckoned

Contest

Another alternate scenario to those printed here would be that the Wyrm's Triatic heads have agreed — for once — that the Apocalypse is to begin, and that it will begin as one of the Maeljin Incarna corrupts one tribe of Garou into falling to the Wyrm's service.

A terrible contest of sorts would follow such a decision, as each of the Maeljin Incarna above, plus the others listed in **Book of the Wyrm** tries to destroy the Garou Nation from within. Some would work to undermine the others rather than devoting all of their attention to the tribe they wished to corrupt, which could spin off some highly political Wyrm-oriented stories. Each of the Maeljin would take great pleasure as Harbinger of the Apocalypse, and most of them no doubt believe they know which tribe would succumb most easily to their... charms.

on. The flip side of this is that the integration of old and new Black Spiral Dancer is never easy or painless, and the integration of hundreds of new Wyrm-Garou should lead to chaos and even, possibly, a civil war in the tribe until clear leaders from both old and new emerge and come to terms with one another.

Gaian Garou might notice this sort of civil war only by the holes it leaves — they would notice the missing fallen tribe and a reduction in Dancer activity for a month or two (during the shakeout), followed by more complex and unified Dancer activity that results in better tactics for the Wyrm's servants in the aftermath.

Rivals to the Dancers

The most likely result of a tribe's fall to the Wyrm is that that tribe stands separately from the Black Spiral Dancers, becoming another tentacle of the Wyrm. While it is possible that the two tribes would cooperate in service of the Wyrm, given the rivalry that Whippoorwill is sure to have with another Wyrmish Garou tribal totem, it is much more likely that the tribes' activities do not seriously overlap. When they do overlap, dark Garou on both sides jockey for dominance over the others.

In a time when the Apocalypse was not already beginning, wily Gaian Garou could probably turn this to their advantage in the long term, setting the two tribes against one another to their mutual destruction. Once the open warfare of the Apocalypse begins, the best Gaian Garou can hope to do is draw the two dark tribes into conflict when their masters would prefer that they cooperated. Clever werewolves might seed rumors of a powerful and undefended Gaian caern among both the fallen tribe and the Black Spiral Dancers and let the two converge, hopefully harming one another greatly enough that a great war moot of Garou can descend on the aftermath and slaughter the survivors.

If the lords of Malfeas are wise — and in this scenario we can assume that they are quite cunning — they may realize that the best choice is to point each of the two tribes at different targets.

Dancers Exterminated

A powerful and proud tribe could perhaps destroy the Black Spiral Dancers after falling to the Wyrm's service. A tribe such as the Silver Fangs might well brook no rival in the Great Destroyer's affections. They are grievously outnumbered, however, which will be the first obstacle to overcome; the Dancers are simply more numerous than any other single tribe.

If the chosen tribe is prone to mount such an assault, the farsighted generals of the Wyrm who orchestrate such a Fall surely know of this likelihood ahead of time (and, presumably, approve of it — perhaps the Dancers' madness has become more of a liability than an asset to the Wyrm's generals). The tribe wouldn't be lured into a Fall if the majority of the Wyrm's forces weren't prepared to back the newly fallen tribe in its assault on the Black Spiral Dancers. Treacherous as this may be, it's the best chance the newly fallen tribe would have.

Surviving Black Spiral Dancers might turn to Gaian Garou for assistance, offering their knowledge of the Wyrm's resources and activities in return for protection against the Wyrm's newest army. Such a scenario should be good for hours of in-character argument, at the very least.

Resolution

In the broadest terms there are only a few possible resolutions to a tribal-fall Apocalypse. Worst of all possibilities, the fallen tribe and its Wyrmish allies slaughter the Garou Nation to the last werewolf, kill Gaia, and flush the universe into Oblivion in the hopes of a more pleasant reincarnation. And the best possibility is that the rest of the Garou discover the fallen tribe before it is entirely corrupted, managing to save most of the tribe, protect the tribal totem, and send those who've been corrupted to an honorable death, averting the Apocalypse itself yet again.

The odds are that the final result of an End Times scenario falls between these two — a Pyrrhic victory for the Garou, or a greatly diminished Garou Nation and Gaia. While there is discussion throughout this book about the repercussions and aftermath of the Apocalypse itself, a few questions pertain strictly to an Apocalypse that results from the fall of a Gaian tribe.

First and foremost, what happens to the fallen tribe? Did all of them fall, or were there some that withstood the call of the Wyrm? Werewolves are a violent and angry bunch; it's entirely likely that some of those who didn't fall to the Wyrm fell to the claws of their brethren. Do the non-fallen members of the tribe and the fallen members slaughter one another, leaving an entire tribe's existence tied up in a neat bow with the Storyteller's pinky on top? Or are things more typically sloppy, with scores of werewolves on both sides killed, and a few survivors from each side?

Can Garou of the fallen tribe be redeemed in any way short of an honorable warrior's death? Perhaps a quest to the Tribal Homeland is in order, or a rite of repentance — unless the fallen Garou really don't regret what they did, and feel that the Wyrm's answer is still the correct one. This is a situation for which there is no correct answer, in or out of game; a vigorous debate should erupt in-character no matter which course is chosen.

For that matter — if Gaia survives — where do the spirits of fallen Garou go after they die? It is possible that the Tribal Homeland welcomes all spirits of that tribe, but it is more likely that the tribe's totem Incarna determines which Garou spirits can come and which must find another home. If the totem falls to the Wyrm, the Tribal Homeland is purged of its former inhabitants and only fallen Garou are welcome. If the totem remains

Power After The Fall

A few possible paths have been heavily foreshadowed. If Albrecht of the Silver Fangs falls to the Wyrm or dies, Konietzko of the Shadow Lords is the obvious warleader of the Garou Nation. If Konietzko falls or dies, Albrecht is the undisputed King and warleader. If they *both* die, though, what happens? Who leads the Garou in the battles of the Apocalypse? Some possibilities:

• **The troupe's pack.** This one's so obvious that it bears clarification. If the pack is generally Rank 4 and 5 and the troupe shows interest in playing the battles of the Apocalypse from a strategic level rather than a tactical level, put them in charge of the nation and let them go nuts. The troupe's pack won't have the respect necessary to lead the Garou Nation through this final war if they haven't gotten up to Rank 4 and 5; if this is where the Storyteller wants them to be, he'd better get them some Renown before the bottom drops out of the sensible world.

• **Golgol Fangs-First.** Golgol is a Rank Six Get of Fenris with decades of experience fighting practically within the maw of the Wyrm. Any Garou that truly claims to lead the Twelve Tribes must impress him, or defeat him. Neither one of those is trivial. Under Golgol's leadership, alliances with the Fera are ignored, and alternatives to combat are dismissed — his is a strictly military operation. This may be enough, but the forces of the Wyrm know Golgol and may be prepared for his strategies.

• **Walks-With-Might and/or Kisasi.** These two lead the Ahadi, the alliance of Garou and Fera across Africa. Walks-With-Might is a stoic, intelligent Silent Strider; Kisasi is the hyena-changer that brought the Ahadi together to defeat the corrupt Black Tooth. While the Fera of Africa trust Walks-With-Might, the Garou of the rest of the world are unlikely to trust Kisasi. Thus Walks-With-Might might be a better candidate to lead a mixed-Breed coalition against the Wyrm, but it isn't clear whether the African coalition will by itself provide sufficient political support to a bid by Walks-With-Might to lead the Garou Nation.

• **Queen Tamara Tvarivich.** This Silver Fang Queen, of House Crescent Moon in Russia, is the logical successor to Albrecht within the Silver Fangs if he should die under circumstances that leave the rest of the tribe intact and on the side of Gaia. Though Tvarivich is not well known outside of Russia, she participated actively in the destruction of Baba Yaga, and has the support of many European and Russian Silver Fangs, Black Furies, and Get of Fenris. Her greatest weakness, politically, is a lack of support outside Europe and Russia.

• **Brendan O'Rourke.** Bron MacFionn is Ard Righ (High King) of the Fianna by right of succession from the old Ard Righ, Brendan O'Rourke. MacFionn, however, isn't a particularly good leader. And O'Rourke isn't dead; he just took his pack on a Deep Umbral quest late in 2000. Should O'Rourke — generally acclaimed as one of the finest High Kings of memory — return from his quest triumphant, few doubt that he would reclaim his crown from Bron (or Son-of-Moonlight, if the Storyteller integrates the subplot of MacFionn's assassination on pg. 43). Brendan O'Rourke's ability to lead the Garou Nation through the darkest possible war depends on the nature of his Umbral quest — which is up to the Storyteller.

• **Chaos and Contention.** No, these aren't the names of a couple of Glass Walker Ragabash. This scenario suggests that *no* Garou stands up to unify the Twelve Tribes, and that each fights its own war on its own fronts. Strategically and thematically, this is not a viable scenario. If the Garou do not unify, they lose, and Gaia dies. The troupe's pack may be able to play kingmaker in such a scenario, using what Renown and political power it has to bring the most intransigent parts of the Garou Nation under the banner of the most qualified king — even if it isn't one of their own.

• **Other Contenders** come from tribes with credibility problems among the rest of the Garou, such as Elizabeth Genereader of the Glass Walkers, Mother Larissa of the Bone Gnawers, Broken Medicine of the Uktena, Akosha's Eye of the Red Talons, or Evan Heals-the-Past of the Wendigo. Each of these characters would have to overcome his or her tribe's stereotypes before having even a chance at leading the Garou Nation against the forces of the Wyrm. Such problems wouldn't stop those Garou from leading their own tribes, and it would be sensible for each of them to be seen at the fore of their respective fronts of the war.

a servant of Gaia (even with its tribe falling) then only loyal Garou of its tribe can enter the Tribal Homeland; the fallen werewolves must create their own Homeland in the Umbra, or simply travel to Malfeas.

How did the tribe's fall affect the rest of the Garou Nation, and what is the Nation's political structure in the aftermath of the Apocalypse? If, say, the Silver Fangs fell to the Wyrm, someone must have filled the leadership vacuum or the Garou would not have survived the Apocalypse. Wartime leaders are notoriously bad at holding on to leadership roles in the aftermath of war — after the Apocalypse, if there *is* an "after the Apocalypse," the Garou will need to help build a new world.

Are there enough Garou left to qualify as a "nation" *per se*, or are there just enough to populate a sept, or even just a single pack? There might not be *any* Garou left — in many possible scenarios, the Garou sacrifice themselves to save Gaia, and She must build a new protector race in the wake of the Apocalypse.

If only a small number of Garou survives the Apocalypse, one possibility is that each survivor becomes the head of a new tribe. The unique characteristics that distinguish each survivor from the others become key traits of the reborn tribes. New tribal totems may arise as minor surviving spirits attach themselves to each survivor, and as each survivor founds a great line of Garou, these minor spirits grow into totem Incarna.

The last question to be considered after the fall of a tribe is the fate of that tribe's totem Incarna. It should be obvious to the troupe whether the tribe's totem fell to the Wyrm or not. If it fell alongside its tribe, what is its fate in the aftermath of an Apocalypse? Must it be hunted down and destroyed, or can it be redeemed? If it didn't fall, and it wasn't destroyed, it must be dormant, trapped, or hiding somewhere; surely a quest is in order to rescue the lost spirit. One possibility to consider here is that even if the totem Incarna is lost forever (destroyed or eternally corrupted), a powerful Jaggling in the service to that Incarna might be elevated to the role of tribal totem spirit. While the Jaggling would have the same general traits as the old Incarna, it should differ in a one or two noteworthy ways. (Perhaps a Jaggling of Stag is unusually bloodthirsty, or a Jaggling of Unicorn that is more interested in purity than in unity. Other Jagglings might be smarter (or more foolish) than their totem Incarna.) This elevation could help pull the remnants of a fallen tribe back together.

Which Tribe?

The first question that is likely to come to mind when contemplating a tribal-fall Apocalypse is: Which tribe is the "best" one to have fall? There's no perfect answer to this question (which is why this book provides twelve of them and guidelines for more).

An easier decision to make is: Should the tribe to fall be one represented in my troupe's pack or not? It's possible that the Storyteller must answer this question in the affirmative; if the ongoing chronicle is a LARP, TinyMUD (including MUX, MUSH, MUCK, MOO, etc), online game, or other very large chronicle, it may well have representatives from all tribes. For others, though, the troupe is likely to have only half a dozen members, leaving half the possible tribes of the Garou Nation unrepresented.

Another Tribe

In many ways this is the easier decision to make. If the falling tribe is not represented in the troupe's pack, it is tempting to turn the tribe into a faceless horde of slavering monsters. This isn't necessary, and in fact is precisely the *wrong* way to go about things. The Storyteller should not *want* a faceless horde of slavering monsters. A tribal fall story is powerful precisely because it takes a group that was formerly the pack's ally and turns it into a band of traitors and enemies.

Therefore, pick a tribe that the troupe's pack is familiar with. Find the pack's staunchest allies, packs that have come to their aid in emergencies and Septs that have acted as shelter and school. Then get out your black magic marker and twist and break everything in sight. Turn that noble warrior into a cunning devourer of manflesh; make the learned Theurge scholar into a monomaniacal madman — no less brilliant, but now turned entirely to darkness.

A Player's Tribe

By choosing the tribe of a pack member, the Storyteller changes the dynamics of the entire Fall, and therefore the entire Apocalypse. While individual tribes may fall according to different paths, a common series of events takes place from a character's perspective.

A Storyteller has to walk a very fine line when running a tribal fall for a tribe represented among the players' pack. If it is the Storyteller's intent to run a tribal-fall Apocalypse, then to a certain extent the actual fall of the tribe is a freight train: it has to happen to make the rest of the chronicle go. But presenting these events as *fait accompli* is a good way to alienate most players, who want to feel as though their actions have an impact on the course of the storyline.

If it is the Storyteller's intent that the pack's actions can avert the Apocalypse itself, then she is encouraged to give the pack free reign to fix things as best they can. Perhaps a fallen totem spirit can be redeemed, or destroyed and replaced; perhaps the fallen elders of the tribe can be redeemed, or destroyed.

However, if the Apocalypse is inevitable, then the best way to give players a handle on the events therein is to allow them to make minor changes to the way it

plays out without really affecting the fact of the fall of the tribe. Perhaps the Storyteller chooses to turn the focus ultra-personal, giving the pack an opportunity to save their Kinfolk family from being raped and murdered by newly fallen Garou of their old tribe. Individual Garou (Mentors or Allies) from the falling tribe might be redeemed — or meet an honorable demise — without preventing the overall fall of the tribe.

Below is a set of common elements for any tribal fall scenario. You might not need all of them, as certain tribes (and certain falls) might bypass one or more of these steps.

Omens: Early in the tribe's fall — or even before it has begun to fall — the only things noticeable are the gentle shakings of cosmology. The tribe itself occupies an important place in Gaia's reality, and the tribe's totem, as an Incarna, has a key role as well. As the tribe begins to fall, thus, Theurges, those with high Gnosis, or those with high Occult scores might all experience unsettling omens. These could occur through dreams or through observations of mystically significant everyday circumstances. Take a look at the "Totem Symbolism" box on p. 82 for some ideas of things that could be used to represent the tribe's totem or the tribe itself.

If the character is himself particularly prone to fall to the Wyrm, he might receive much more vivid and intense visions — if they occur while he is awake they might leave him stunned and reeling if not in a frenzy of some sort. If they occur in his dreams they're sure to wake him up in a cold sweat or with shouts. These Wyrmish visions generally involve the character himself elevated to a station of great physical/mystical/political power, with Garou and humans alike abasing themselves before him. They don't involve the Wyrm immediately, though over time they certainly head in that direction.

Politics: As some factions of the tribe turn toward the Wyrm, a Garou character may hear rumors of strange activity among her tribemates. Rumor spreads far and wide — perhaps the initial cover story spread through the tribe is that the tribe's leadership has been working on a secret ritual to fight the Weaver or Wyrm.

As the circle of fallen Garou expands through the tribe, the fallen exclude those that still serve Gaia from otherwise ordinary rituals or tribal activities. Rumors of a "cult of the favored" may spread among the Gaian Garou, many of whom may petition to join the "favored" so that they can regain what political power they had, never guessing that such activity will spell their doom. Certain septs could fall in their entirety very quickly, while others (more insular and paranoid septs, or multitribal septs) might be quite resistant to the call of the Wyrm.

For the troupe's pack, this may be a time for careful investigation. At the same time, though, the fallen Garou of the tribe are at their most paranoid. Spirits and young Garou patrol the outskirts of nearly every gathering, Garou all wear Wolf Skin fetishes (see Appendix), and so on.

A Garou character resisting the political tide, perhaps suspecting that something is not altogether right with her tribemates, may be approached by one of her erstwhile tribemates and given a proposal of the sort that most Garou could not refuse. A renown-hound might receive an offer to head up a special pack of elite warriors. A curious mystic might be offered some new mystical wisdom; a techno-geek might be offered some of the latest hardware and bleeding-edge software (all the way from Scar, er, I mean, the Glass Walker Tribal Homeland!). Each of these gifts is contingent upon the character's participation in an important upcoming ritual, of course... Refusal to participate gets the character tagged as a potential troublemaker, to be dealt with in short order, as seen below under "Hunts".

Hunts: Once the fallen Garou of the tribe solidify their power base, and control roughly 2/3 of the tribe's numbers, they begin calling nightly hunts of the "rebels" who remain in service to Gaia. This is a brief and intense period just before the tribe's fall comes out into the open, and it really represents the kickoff of the Apocalypse itself.

The hunters do their best to capture rebellious tribemates alive, and bring them back to the nearest Hive for "re-education." This gives rebel Garou a fighting chance, as their foes aren't striking to kill — at least not at first. Once the fallen tribe has been exposed to the rest of the Garou Nation, its leadership accepts that most remaining rebels are simply losses to their great cause, and strike at them just as they would strike at any other Gaian Garou.

In the end, not every Garou of the fallen tribe falls into the service of the Wyrm. Some keep their freedom; some manage to be adopted by another tribe's totem or live as Ronin through the Last Days.

Tribal Stories

For your use, thirteen different tribal fall stories (well, twelve tribal falls and one cultural fall) are provided on the following pages. None of these are "canonical" by any means — bits and pieces of each can and should be stolen and applied to your chronicle's games as you see fit.

Nearly all of these stories would benefit from the information found in the appropriate Tribebook. Information in **A World of Rage** would also be quite valuable in expanding the short descriptions into full-blown stories.

Black Furies

Sobriquet: Widows

Foreshadowing

Since the Eye of the Wyrm opened, the Black Furies have suffered from a malady they call the Metamorphic Plague. This disease causes Black Furies to simply *change* — without ill health effects — over the course of a few weeks. The changes start off as relatively minor things — taste in music or eye color — but within a few months the Garou is someone entirely other, with a new personality, appearance, and even memories. The person remains Garou, and nearly always remains a Black Fury, for Pegasus still accepts her. The Furies have no idea why this metamorphosis occurs — Great Pegasus himself is silent on the matter.

The Metamorphic Plague truly is a disease, however — it seems to jump from one Black Fury to another after the manner of a virus or bacteria. In early 2003, the Plague begins to strike at the heart of the Black Furies tribe. It infects Furies who are packmates to members of the Outer Calyx, and from there jumps to Aspen Axecrescent, herself a member of the Outer Calyx. By Midsummer of 2003 fully one-quarter of the Black Furies tribe are victims of the Metamorphic Plague.

The Crones of the Temple of Artemis camp confer on the matter at the Sept of Bygone Visions for the three days after the Summer Solstice of 2003. Through lengthy ritual, sacrifice, and communion with the spirit realm, they come to the conclusion that the Wyld itself is causing the plague. They also conclude that the Furies, through their regular contact with the Wyld and its servants, are the vectors for an illness that could eventually overwhelm the Garou Nation.

The Temple of Artemis and the Inner and Outer Calyx spend the next three months trying out various rituals to sever the tribe's bond with the Wyld, or otherwise halt the progress of the Plague. Although the eldest Theurges and Galliards are summoned to the tribe's longest-held caern for these rites, no Gaian or Wyld ritual works.

The First Step

Even in so dire a circumstance, the Crones of the tribe feel that they cannot turn to the Weaver, though the Pattern Spiders of that great spirit might be able to harden the Furies' natures against the Metamorphic Plague of the Wyld. The Crones therefore turn to the only alternative they feel that they have left: the Wyrm.

Rationally, they begin by contacting truly ancient, mostly dormant Wyrm spirits that might still serve the long-dead Wyrm of Balance. At first this seems to work, for the Wyrm's eldest and most intelligent servants do not immediately leap to perform acts of evil. But surely, over time, they draw the elders and leaders of the Black Furies tribe into more overt acts of Wyrm-service, until at last the tribe is drawn into darkness.

Interfering

There is little the troupe's pack can do to interfere with the Black Furies' fall unless they are Black Furies themselves and actually a part of the Outer Calyx, or are old and conservative enough to be members of the Temple of Artemis camp. However, they might learn something of what those groups are planning over time through cleverness, spirits, or ordinary spying.

A pack of Rank Three or less simply won't have the political influence necessary to sway the attitudes of the tribe's leadership before it is too late. A higher-ranked pack is in for the political struggle of its life (unless it agrees with the other elder Furies that the tribe's only choice is to turn to powerful Wyrm spirits to stop the plague).

Despite the Furies' ties through the randomly-selected Outer Calyx and secret Inner Calyx, a few packs do avoid the tribe's fall. Additionally, those Furies who survived the Metamorphic Plague are unusually resistant to the taint of the Wyrm, and are less likely to fall as a result.

Revealed!

The Furies — now calling themselves the Widows — remain caught between Wyrm and Wyld. They dedicate themselves to the premise that the structure of human society as wrought by the Weaver must be brought down. From complex governmental structure to sophisticated high technology, the Widows want the end of all of it. If the demolition of such artifice happens to lead to the deaths of hundreds of millions of humans, so be it.

The Widows launch monkeywrenching attacks at the complex infrastructure that supports modern cities across the world. They send several packs to each of the ten largest cities under protection of the Western Concordat (Mumbai, India; Sao Paulo, Brazil; Karachi, Pakistan; Delhi, India; Mexico City, Mexico; Moscow, Russia; Istanbul, Turkey; New York City, US; London, UK; and Cairo, Egypt). They avoid cities of the Middle Kingdom due to unfamiliarity with that area's spirit world and those cities' defenders.

The Widows attack core infrastructure sites: Power plants, sewage treatment facilities, waterworks, natural gas processing facilities, and telecommunications centers. If they have time to spare they strike at main

thoroughfares in an attempt to disrupt Weaverish traffic patterns.

It takes only a few hours for Glass Walkers and Bone Gnawers in the afflicted cities to respond to the Widows' depredations, and shock rumbles throughout the Garou Nation when they discover the Widows' true identities.

Open Warfare

Gaian Garou take a few days to consult with spirits and omens before coming to the conclusion that the Black Furies have fallen. In this time, cities across the globe fall victim to mass exodus and rioting as basic services break down. The Widows use attack moon bridges and Umbral travel to strike at individual cities for a few hours and then return to safe havens. Soon every major city on the globe — surely all those with populations of a million or greater — feels as though it is under attack from a global terror network.

Pegasus

Pegasus remains free of the Wyrm until trapped through a rite similar to the Rite of the Vengeful Spider, which is voluntarily performed by members of the fallen Outer Calyx. The fallen Pegasus withstands attacks from Gaian spirits, evades pursuit by totem Incarna from Owl to Falcon, and eventually escapes to Malfeas, where it kneels in supplication before its new master. The fallen Pegasus remains the Widows' tribal totem; it becomes a dark creature of vengeance, its servants swooping out of the night to lay waste to Gaian forces.

...And The Black Spiral Dancers

The Black Spiral Dancers are wild enough — mad enough, that is — to avoid the Widows' ire. The madwomen of the tribe specifically take aside the most insane, least functional metis from among the Dancers and force them to perform at Widows' moots. Widow augurs and Theurges examine the metis' capering movements or the footprints or blood spatters they leave behind in the hopes of gleaning more information about what is to come.

Otherwise, on the battlefield, the Widows take charge of the Dancers, with a few exceptions (such as Zhyzhak). The two tribes function as a fairly integrated fighting force. Several Maeljin Incarnae also take to the battlefield; some serve Widow packs as totems of convenience, while others, such as Hellbringer, prefer to wreak havoc on their own terms.

Apocalypse

The Widows' goal is to reduce all of humanity to tribal levels of social complexity and technology. Should their scheme to shut down cities across the globe succeed to any noteworthy degree, their next targets are high technology firms of all kinds, as well as universities and other centers of learning. The Widows expect that with judicious use of explosives, Wyrm Gifts, and terror in the general populace, they should be able to get humanity down to circa-1900 tech levels by the end of a year.

They won't have a chance to get humanity much farther than that, as the Wyrm and its more direct servants have specific ideas about slaying Gaia Herself. They intend to use the deaths of so many innocents, and the destruction of knowledge, to plant a seed of the Wyrm's inner void within the stone of Gaia's body, and let the planet consume itself. Should they succeed in this, the Apocalypse is over; the Wyrm wins.

Alternatively

Rape camps in the Balkans, wars for oil, African genocides, and other male-led atrocities throughout the human world lead the Inner Calyx of the Black Furies to declare a pogrom against human males. At first this information is kept strictly under wraps — the Furies know that they cannot simply up and kill half the human species; the other Garou will take action against them, and human armies and governments throughout the world will eventually strike them down.

No, the Furies know that they have to act stealthily at first. Thankfully, given the secret nature of the Inner Calyx, secrecy isn't hard. Pegasus already detests human males, after his gelding at the hands of the Greek hero Perseus millennia ago, and it doesn't take much convincing by the most ancient Crones and their ancestor-spirits for Pegasus to go along with the plan.

Bone Gnawers

Sobriquet: Plague Rats

Foreshadowing

In this scenario, the Bone Gnawers have been slowly falling to the Wyrm for years — starting as long ago as the Los Angeles riots in 1992. This probably wouldn't come as a surprise to most Garou of other tribes, who have always suspected that the Bone Gnawers weren't quite right. The worst of the falling has happened among the rabble of the tribe — those that live in temporary dwellings within the cities, taking no territory for their own. The rabble have always been the most desperate members of the tribe — for instance, many of them suffer from Harano, and plenty of them suffer from Derangements of one sort or another from their lonely and dangerous life on the street. Many are Ronin, eschewing a pack.

The Wyrm lured the rabble first. Its servants — corrupted Ratkin, murky spirits from deep within the sewers, or half-dead stumbling homeless people — gave the rabble dreams of wealth and power. In many cases the servants provided fetishes to stabilize the rabble: they settled down, they claimed territory. Over time, some even join formal packs. The packs they join are made up of others much like themselves — rabble courted by the Wyrm. Most aren't Wyrm-tainted right away (though they carry some Wyrm-tainted fetishes and might learn a Wyrm-spawned rite or two), but the path of the Wyrm is certainly *easier* than the path of Gaia.

The corrupted Gnawers don't waste any time doing Gaia's work in the cities, but that isn't easy to see. Local sept leaders might be able to get them to undertake particular tasks with Gaian implications, but the rabble won't do things like bring warring gangs to a table and discuss peace, or help kids after school or even break up crimes. They might do simple things — act as couriers, do menial labor — if they're compensated for it.

By slowly expanding the circle from the rabble to the half-hearted to Harano-stricken former heroes, soon the Wyrm-influenced Bone Gnawers far outnumber those who have previously stood fast against the Wyrm's predations.

The First Step

The fallen rabble assassinate Mother Larissa on the eve of a great Super Bowl Sunday moot in 2004. (This moot should take place at a caern convenient to the Storyteller's ongoing chronicle — if she prefers that the players not interfere, it should be far away.) At that moot the fallen Gnawers — calling themselves the Plague Rats — offer their outnumbered former brethren a simple choice: Join or die. About half of the unfallen Gnawers stand at this great moot. Of those, one-third surrenders, one-third dies fighting its tribemates, and one-third, in the Gnawer tradition, flees.

Covert Activity

From there, the Plague Rats, along with their allies the Ratkin and Black Spiral Dancers, engage in a two-front war. On one hand they stalk their unfallen tribemates across the globe; on the other they begin to stage lightning raids against the Glass Walkers and their holdings in the greatest cities on Earth.

Many Plague Rats enlist the aid of vampires in the search for their unfallen comrades, claiming that all is forgiven and even accepting draughts of vampire blood — blood that is powerless to control dedicated servants of the Wyrm. Those Bone Gnawers that remain in the cities are found, one by one; most are slain, but many are given to the Leeches as experimental subjects. One Plague Rat, a Ragabash named Snarls-in-Shadow, endures vampiric Embrace, and emerges as a terrifying assassin of the night in the battles that follow.

The fallen Bone Gnawers and their dark masters know

that the final battles of the Apocalypse will be fought with modern arms and armor, and that the Glass Walkers hold the keys to such resources among the Garou. Therefore they strike at financial and military holdings among the Walkers — and, where convenient, similar holdings controlled by other tribes. When possible, the Gnawers implicate members of other tribes for these activities, or even leave trails for humans to find that point at their one-time allies.

Revealed!

The other tribes learn of the Bone Gnawers' fall to the Wyrm as their Wolf Skin fetishes fail. The Wyrm tires of the Plague Rats' slow expansion and chooses to drive them out into the open. In this fashion desperation ought to speed the Rats' war plans. Or perhaps powerful Gaian spirits (or a lone pack of Garou) destroy the Wolf Skins at an opportune time.

With this, the Plague Rats swarm over their enemies across the world. Wherever they can do so, they infect whole cities with awakened weapons of bioterror — anthrax and far worse custom bacteria and viruses are placed in shopping malls, mass transit, sports stadiums, and water supplies.

Rat

Rat is a survivor. While he does remain in the service of Gaia as the first of his Jagglings and Gafflings fall to the Wyrm, as soon as the tribe hits the tipping point — the moment that it is obvious that there's no turning back from the dark road — Rat jumps ship. It places itself in service of the Wyrm, becoming an even darker spirit than it had been — a spirit not just of fertility but of offensive fecundity, overpopulating an area with all-consuming vermin spawn. Rat also becomes the Plague Rat, just as its children do; fallen Bone Gnawers gain access to the Gift: Plague Child (see Appendix).

...And Others

The Black Spiral Dancers are happy to ally with the Plague Rats. Most of the Dancers carry a few virulent diseases of their own and are mostly immune to the Rats' bugs. At the same time, the Dancers serve as good cannon fodder. They aren't too bright, and are so heavily inbred that most are psychotically insane. It doesn't take much for the Plague Rats to push them in a desired direction.

Rat's fall serves as an example to many Ratkin. Not all of them leap to the Wyrm's side, but most decide that the battle to save Gaia is lost. Those that do not join the Wyrm abandon Gaia entirely — either they plunge into the Umbra (perhaps to Rat's spirit Homeland) or they head to the safest spot they can find in the Realm and hope that all goes well. True to their natures, these refugees won't join in the war unless they have nowhere left to run.

Apocalypse

Millions of humans are stricken with a hideous bioengineered (and/or spirit-engineered) diseases. Those in the cities have it worst, hit by multiple bugs and surrounded on all sides by other infected carriers. Many in the cities flee into the wilderness, and many of those fleeing carry at least one of the Plague Rats' bugs. Within weeks, millions die. Within two months one billion humans die. Many of the remainder turn to savagery; travel is utterly forbidden, on penalty of death. Ruthless, desperate modern governments burn whole towns to preserve those that yet survive. In Third World countries, the only communities to survive are those that become deathly xenophobic.

The Garou Nation works to counter the efforts of the Plague Rats wherever they can, but the chaos that the Rats sow occupies many Garou. Disease is an enemy that werewolves cannot strike directly at — the best they can hope to do is stem its progress and ease the agony of their Kinfolk's passing. Many packs find themselves too busy protecting Kinfolk communities from the chaos of plague to fight the Wyrm's forces directly. And despite their great fortitude, Garou are not immune to these Wyrm-born plagues. The hardiest survive, as do those who have mystic protection against disease, but many of the warriors of the last battle fight it feverish and hardly able to stand, knowing that they will die even if they do win.

It takes a Garou leader of truly outstanding charisma and vision to unite the tribes — to pull them away from one sacred mission (protecting their own) and guide them toward their true mission (saving Gaia). That leader may be any werewolf listed in the box "Power After the Fall," on p. 86.

The Final Battle between the forces of Gaia and the forces of the Wyrm, thusly, takes place on a world stage that has been driven into chaos. Perhaps it takes place in a near-empty Times Square, Trafalgar Square, or Tiananmen Square, in the ruins of a falling society. Corpses pile up everywhere and the stench is incredible. The Plague Rats have the upper hand, but they are not warriors. They can be defeated by an alliance of sufficiently brave and powerful Garou.

Children of Gaia

Sobriquet: Reavers

Foreshadowing

Two main paths lead the Children of Gaia to fall to the Wyrm and bring about the Apocalypse. The first path is that of Cernounos, a Child of Gaia scientist. Cernounos spent years wandering the wilds of Australia in search of thylacines. After years of searching, in 2000, he found sufficient thylacine DNA to attempt to breed Garou.

Cernounos succeeded... after a fashion. The "Bunyip" he recreated weren't really Bunyip at all, nor were they truly Garou, half-spirit, half-flesh. He recreated the flesh, but his clumsy technology could never conjure up Bunyip spirits to join with the flesh. In their youth, these creatures were merely hollow with no true Gaian spirit to drive them. As they aged, they came to the attention of dark spirits in the Wyrm's service. They weren't exactly possessed; it's simply that their spiritual bits were filled in with dark energies rather than light.

Soon this large pack — ten females and two males, calling themselves the Hollow Walkers — was entirely devoted to the service of the Wyrm. Cernounos was the first to fall to the Hollow Walkers. He emailed out electronic notes describing his activities and expected fate to a number of his tribemates, and then was forced to walk the Black Spiral, joining the Hollow Walkers in service to the Wyrm.

As word of Cernounos' fate and the rumors of the birth of the Perfect Metis began to swirl through the Children of Gaia, the elders of the tribe decided to take firm action.

True Silverheels and the Voice of the Goddess met with the other leaders of the tribe at the Hand of Gaia Caern in late 2002. They put voice to the hidden truth that the Garou Nation had known for decades but refused to really hear aloud. The Weaver had driven the Wyrm mad, yes. But madness can be cured. The Wyrm and the Weaver could be healed, each one made whole again. The process would be terrible, and would undoubtedly require sacrifice. But, the tribe's leadership reasoned, the other tribes were too focused on fighting a war for Gaia to realize that their only hope lay in surrender, and healing. And, as the Ahroun Flying Bear pointed out, who better to sacrifice themselves for the Garou Nation than the Children of Gaia?

The elders of the Children of Gaia recognize that the other tribes would not understand their activities, and so keep their work covert. Various Unicorn packs entreat with various spirit mentors and travel on distant Umbral quests to find an appropriate ritual. Unknown to most of the Children, they receive quiet aid from spirits of the Wyrm of Balance, who genuinely wish to see these Garou succeed in their quest.

Finally, the Children of Gaia find an ancient Croatan ritual, the Ritual of Sacred Redemption, which, when properly performed, should be able to restore sanity to the mind of even one of the Triat. Silverheels and the other leaders of the tribe decide that the Wyrm is the greatest threat facing the Garou, and therefore they target it with the Ritual of Sacred Redemption — they believe that once the Wyrm is healed, the other tribes will willingly join them in performing the rite over the Weaver, and then the threat to Gaia will be gone.

The Ritual is enormously powerful, and requires the sacrifice of thousands of points of Gnosis (in many cases this is expressed in blood, and dozens of Children of Gaia willingly give up their lives over the course of the rite). It causes storms for miles around the Caern of the Hand of Gaia, both in the Umbra and in the Realm.

The First Step

But something goes wrong. Something goes really wrong. Perhaps the Wyrm tainted the ritual; maybe it was incomplete or damaged by the sacrifice of the Croatan. Or maybe the elder Theurges of the Children of Gaia made a mistake in performing the rite (someone botched a roll!). Instead of stitching together the Wyrm's damaged psyche, the rite reawakens and frees Eater-of-Souls *right there*, at the Hand of Gaia Caern. No werewolf on the continent sleeps another night without knowing of this demigod's reemergence.

Revealed!

The Garou of North America — and the world — waste little time, bringing an all-out assault against the Children of Gaia and the spirit they have awakened. The Wendigo lead the attack, but they are by no means alone; this travesty unites the Wendigo with the other tribes in ways few could have expected. The Children know too well that they cannot claim that this was an accident. They know that they will not be believed. A few flee into exile in the Umbra; others renounce their tribal affiliation; and many die in combat against their brethren. The remainder, led by the metis Ahroun Flying Bear, turn to Eater-of-Souls for protection and power. The Children of Gaia always stood outside the circle of Garou society — they were never the warriors and so never fully accepted. Now the Reavers take a place opposed to that circle.

Open Warfare

The Reavers do not trigger the Delirium in humans, and Eater-of-Souls delights in its ability to generate absolute terror without the shield of the Delirium to protect ordinary humans. The Hand of Gaia Caern — now the Wyrmclaw Pit — becomes the center of a slowly spreading miasma, a sort of spiritual fog. As this fog spreads, towns, cities, and Gaian caerns succumb to the psychic depredations of Eater-of-Souls. Within the fog, food loses its value to sustain human life. People succumb to despair and horror — a horror only amplified when some desperate individual discovers that human flesh can sustain him.

Unicorn

After the disastrous ritual, Eater-of-Souls destroys Unicorn and gladly takes its place as mentor to the

Reavers. Unicorn fights valiantly — it manifests in the Realm to fight Eater-of-Souls directly — but it is no use. Unicorn is no warrior. It calls out, at the end, to its newest children — Garou exiled from other tribes, whom only Unicorn accepted — and begs them to flee the Reavers and return to the side of Gaia. A few packs do leave Eater-of-Souls' side and return to the tribes of their bloodline. Most do not.

...And The Black Spiral Dancers

The Black Spiral Dancers mostly serve as the spearheads of the Defiler Wyrm and Beast-of-War as they join the battle in the Realm. The Reavers are the servants of Eater-of-Souls. The tribes occasionally fight as allies, but the three heads of the Triatic Wyrm do not get along well, and that rivalry extends to their servants.

Apocalypse

The United States and Canada mobilize their armies as Eater-of-Souls' miasma grows to occupy most of upper New York, expanding across Lake Erie into Ontario and south into Pennsylvania. Most humans (that is, those with a Willpower score under 8) cannot resist the despair of the fog, so all that the armies can really do is slowly retreat before the miasma.

Gaian Garou, therefore, are the only hope to defeat Eater-of-Souls and his foul tribe of servants.

Beast-of-War unleashes his spirit hordes in the Middle East, hoping to spur a conflagration there; the Defiler Wyrm emerges in eastern Asia, where the Hengeyokai immediately engage his forces. Albrecht dies in early fighting near the Black Sea, and Margrave Konietzko leads the Garou Nation from that point forward. Zhyzhak, in service to Beast-of-War, waltzes back and forth with Konietzko over hundreds of miles. Always, many packs of Garou stand between the Margrave and the Black Spiral Dancer fated to slay the last Gaian King. Konietzko is no fool; he takes the prophecy about Zhyzhak seriously. He rationally refuses to engage her directly in combat — even at the risk of some Glory renown when he flees from a battle in Kazakhstan.

Garou and Fera of the Americas take on Eater-of-Souls. A coalition of Uktena and Wendigo lead the assault on upstate New York, but Garou of all tribes — and Fera of all races — join in the fight. The war is unlike anything seen in North America since before the first War of Rage. Tribes and Breeds work seamlessly together. But in every square mile that Eater-of-Souls gains, there are more humans starving for him, and another bound Bane is freed into his service.

It took the sacrifice of an entire tribe of werewolves just to imprison Eater-of-Souls, hundreds of years ago. Modern Garou know two things. First, that simple imprisonment obviously isn't going to suffice. Second, that some if not all of them are going to have to make a permanent sacrifice to defeat Eater-of-Souls again.

In the end the Reavers may come to their senses, and the Children of Gaia — always the ones to turn the other cheek, to take an extra burden for their packmates — may well sacrifice themselves to bind Eater-of-Souls. But what can be done to destroy him? And what of the other two heads of the Wyrm? Will it take six tribes?

Fianna

Sobriquet: Black Stags

Foreshadowing

As described in **Tribebook: Fianna**, the ancestral home of the Fianna tribe is Silver Tara, the greatest Fianna caern in the British Isles, and possibly the world. Silver Tara is home to the Ard Righ, Bron MacFionn, leader by acclaim of the righs — alphas — of all the Fianna septs throughout the world.

MacFionn took his place after a concerted Black Spiral Dancer attack on Silver Tara in November of 2000. Fianna from across the globe descended on Tara to defend it, and though there was a bloody struggle the walls held. In the wake of that attack, the old Ard Righ, Brendan O'Rourke, said he was taking his pack on a quest into the Deep Umbra, and handed his crown to MacFionn.

MacFionn, a member of the Tuatha De Fionn camp of the tribe, reestablished close relations with those fae that remain in the modern world, and endeavored to reopen the closed doors to Arcadia. He has even spurned a handful of mighty Ahroun of his own tribe in favor of a troll as his bodyguard. Many among the tribe whisper that MacFionn is no leader — rather that he is a strong warrior with no leadership skill and more interest in the fair folk than his own tribe. The Lupus Theurge Son-of-Moonlight has earned broad respect throughout the tribe, and has entered into quiet discussions with Margrave Konietzko of the Shadow Lords about the future of the Garou Nation.

On January 12, 2004, all this comes to a head. Brendan O'Rourke returns to Silver Tara, but not quite in the way he was expected. His pack's earlier ventures into the Umbra had led them to Malfeas, and there they were turned to the service of the Wyrm. His most recent departure was an excuse to gather reinforcements for a massive attack on Fianna holdings throughout the British Isles.

O'Rourke knows the secret paths and byways to Silver Tara, and he knows Bron MacFionn's weaknesses. His Black Spiral Dancers carry cold iron along with their silver — a few even carry mystically wrought klaives with the characteristics of both silver and cold iron. Brendan's assault takes advantage of MacFionn's

affection for the fae and his leadership problems. He waits for a time when MacFionn and his pack are visiting the Arcadia Gateway, exploring for ways to reopen the portal to the home of the Fae. O'Rourke's Dancers then strike at several Fianna holdings simultaneously — Silver Tara, the Tri-Spiral Caern in Ireland, the Woodheart Caern in Pennsylvania, and the Fire Bluff Caern outside Melbourne, Australia.

The Fianna at Silver Tara are not quite caught unprepared, but they do not have their Ard Righ on-hand and struggle to hold the walls against literally hundreds of Dancers until his return. When a spirit messenger does bring MacFionn back to Silver Tara, his instinctive response is to blow his ancient horn and summon his tribemates from across the world. Few, however, heed the call — the Woodheart Caern in Pennsylvania has been overrun entirely, and the other two major tribal caerns are besieged and can spare no warriors.

Within another day, Silver Tara is lost. Its warriors scatter, to be hunted down by packs of Black Spiral Dancers and driven down into the Pits of the Wyrm. The head of Bron MacFionn's troll bodyguard is planted above the shattered gate of Silver Tara; MacFionn himself is taken to walk the Black Spiral. O'Rourke declares himself the Ard Righ of the True Fianna, announcing that he and his have reclaimed the tribe's holdings from "insidious spies and traitors from Faerie." O'Rourke's Fianna wear Wolf Skins (see Appendix), hiding their Wyrm taint for the time being. The Black Spiral Dancers only participate in the fighting when no other Garou are around.

Further Activity

The survivors of the January 12th attacks flee to septs across Europe, America, and Australia. O'Rourke trumpets to the other tribes that these refugees are traitors and servants of the Wyrm. Some tribes welcome the survivors with open arms, while others are more suspicious and even hostile. None are prepared to participate in a civil war among the Fianna.

For a few weeks, most of the other tribes hold off, watching Fianna battle Fianna here and there in small skirmishes. Over time, though, various packs join the battle on one side or the other. Konietzko and the Balkan Alliance fall on the side of Son-of-Moonlight and the refugees, while Albrecht and the Silver Fangs lean toward O'Rourke's claims. Few entire septs commit one way or another, but blows are exchanged and the Garou Nation appears to be on the verge of collapse.

Revealed!

A bit of good fortune keeps the Garou Nation from crumbling entirely, and gives them a little breathing room to boot. Throughout history, the Fianna have used the Rite of the Hero's Sleep on their greatest warriors after those warriors fall in battle. This powerful ritual provides the means for these warriors — and, in some cases, their packmates — to arise and take up arms at the dawn of the Apocalypse.

At spring's first dawn, a score of stony cairns throughout the British Isles — and a few in North America and Australia — open themselves, revealing ancient warriors. These ancient Fianna heroes show no semblance of death, for the ancestor-spirits that once inhabited their shells are drawn back by the trumpets of the Apocalypse's dawning.

Unlike the living of the other tribes, these hallowed heroes show neither halting nor remorse as they begin to relentlessly assault O'Rourke's conquests.

Open Warfare

With this, earthquakes rumble across the globe; the sky darkens; Wyrm creatures emerge from dark fissures in the earth and stagnant polluted ponds. The Apocalypse begins in earnest. On one side, the Black Stags, the Black Spiral Dancers, and millions of Banes. On the other, two dozen reborn Fianna heroes, a few thousand Garou, and their spirit allies.

Stag

Non-Fianna packs of Stag are among the first outside the tribe to notice that something is wrong with O'Rourke's Fianna faction. Stag, the totem Incarna, fights against the corruption within his tribe to the very end — for all the good it does him. Packs following Stag receive dire omens starting a few days before O'Rourke returns from his Umbral quest.

Stag does not cut his fallen children off entirely, nor does he ever attack them directly. Most of O'Rourke's followers fall into line behind another Wyrm totem — some turn to Whippoorwill, others to one of the Maeljin Incarnae or another powerful Wyrmish spirit.

Once the Apocalypse begins in earnest, stag-spirits participate as actively as they can on the side of Gaia. Among other things, this means that any Gift ordinarily taught by a stag-spirit can be learned at 2/3 the normal experience cost (at some price to the spirit).

...And The Black Spiral Dancers

The Dancers and Black Stags are uneasy allies. They rarely fight side-by-side — bad blood between the two tribes keeps them from trusting one another in life-or-death situations. The Fenrir are the first to notice this — they find that none of their packs ever fight both Stags and Dancers at once. It's always one or the other, which means that once a pack realizes which sort of dark Garou they are fighting, they can adjust their tactics and Gift use accordingly.

Once the forces of the Wyrm realize that this is happening, a few packs are forcibly integrated, which leads to more Wyrmish victories. The integration also leads a few of these new packs to detonate, leaving behind only a few survivors from one pack or the other, so in the end the integration is a wash.

Apocalypse

O'Rourke does gain allies within the Garou Nation in the time before he is revealed — most of these are British werewolves who have no affection for Bron Mac Fionn and his fae-loving reign. When O'Rourke's deception is finally revealed, many Gaian werewolves turn on him. A half-dozen packs remain, either swayed by O'Rourke's personal charisma, lured by the Wyrm's promises of power, or too proud to return to their tribemates after such a colossal mistake. The Black Stags make a mess of the British Isles rather quickly; they loot, pillage, and rape across Britain and Ireland in the span of months, driving flotillas full of refugees to Europe. Mainland European Stags rely more on support from the Black Spiral Dancers and Wyrmish spirits and humans than those in the UK and Ireland do. Black Stags across North America stage their own attacks; they are powerful in battle, but outnumbered at first.

That changes when Black Stags infiltrate a number of Uktena sites and slaughter the Uktena Bane Tenders holding some of the most powerful Banes of North America in check. With the Tenders dead or corrupted, dozens of enormously powerful Banes — each far stronger than a Nexus Crawler — leap into the Realm and begin a feast of mad destruction.

Get of Fenris

Sobriquet: The Pure

Foreshadowing

The Get of Fenris' fall is probably the most straightforward of any of the tribes'. An enormous series of tunnels connects the traditional Fenrir tribal holdings across northern Europe to the first Black Spiral Pit in Scotland. These tunnels occasionally dwarf even the Channel Tunnel in diameter and certainly dwarf it in length.

The Get of Fenris discover in late 2003 that the Black Spiral Dancers have been using these tunnels as their primary support network in the Battle for the Schwarzwald. More generally, the Spirals use these tunnels to strike across Europe and fade back into the chthonic dark. Many Spirals use the Gift: Sprint in Shadow (see Appendix) to traverse

hundreds of miles through this space in mere minutes. That allows the Spirals to seem to strike in dozens of places simultaneously. Since then a quiet movement has swept through the tribe: the Litany says "Combat the Wyrm where it dwells." The Ahroun Else Wyrm-Guard, one of the eldest survivors of the siege of the Sept of the Blood Fist, leads this movement.

In some other tribes this sort of political movement might lead to careful debate and political maneuverings. In an epic series of challenges at a moot in the Schwarzwald itself, Else Wyrm-Guard takes on all comers who feel that a crusade into the tunnels is the wrong choice. After sixteen combat challenges, the final one a bloody 45-minute duel at dawn with the American Ahroun Haakon Hammerstrike, Else Wyrm-Guard commands that the Get of Fenris declare war on whatever resides within the North Sea Caverns.

Within a few weeks the Fenrir begin a full-fledged campaign through the tunnels to crush the Dancers within and purify the Pit that they are sure sits at the heart of the North Sea Caverns.

The First Step

The Black Spirals are canny foes. They fall back again and again — they certainly take losses in every engagement with the Fenrir, but every battle pulls the Get further into the tunnels. And the tunnels that the Black Spirals retreat into aren't level caverns useful for moving from Britain to mainland Europe — no, the Spirals slowly lure the Fenrir deeper and deeper into the Earth, carefully picking off those werewolves who seem less likely to submit to the Wyrm's embrace.

Finally, with all lines of escape cut off, the Fenrir experience visions. The precise visions vary from werewolf to werewolf — some see the victory of the Fenrir over the forces of the Wyrm, while others find themselves surrounded by giant black bugs that nibble at their flesh, and others see themselves crowned High King. The visions persist for days, and drive the Get of Fenris mad. In the depths of this madness they succumb to the thrall of the Wyrm.

Covert Activity

The Fenrir have never been a subtle tribe; once the Wyrm shreds their inhibitions and loyalties, they take only a short time of secrecy. The madness of the Wyrm is too strongly upon them for the Fenrir to conceal their motivations for more than a month or so. The wisest of the Pure, however, counsel their brethren to move freely throughout Gaian sept territory until the moment is right. In this fashion the tribe is ready to strike from utter surprise.

Gaian Garou in strong, relatively peaceful septs throughout northern and central Europe are surprised to find the Get of Fenris attending their moots in great number, but few pay it any mind. Only a few seers have any idea that something unusual is going on, and the omens they receive are dire but vague. Most of the caerns the Fenrir set up in are those of healing, meditation, peace and careful thought.

Revealed!

The Pure reveal themselves simultaneously throughout Europe, on February 6th, 2004 (the first full moon in that month). They sabotage the mystic defenses of a dozen caerns across the continent; they assault packs of caern defenders, and they disrupt Moot Rites. Black Spiral Dancers pour from nearby pits, leading hordes of Banes and even a few Thunderwyrms into the assault. Nearly all of these caerns fall, either desecrated and closed or perverted to the Wyrm's service.

Open Warfare

The back of the Garou Nation in Europe is broken with this lightning assault; lines of communication and moon bridges remain open, but the Pure were careful to attack support, rear-echelon sorts of caerns in their opening assault. The destruction of these caerns makes it much more difficult for wounded Garou to find healing and aid and gives them far fewer places to fall back to and regroup when under assault.

That's as the Pure planned it. Once they are sure that the Garou support caerns are destroyed or perverted, they turn against Shadow Lord holdings in Eastern Europe. Margrave Konietzko takes the field personally against Else Wyrm-Mistress in a battle that shakes the hills and destroys more than an acre of Hungarian suburb. Konietzko is near death but also on the edge of victory when Zhyzhak joins the fray on Wyrm-Mistress's side. After Else upends him, Zhyzhak literally crushes Konietzko's skull under her

The Get of the Amazon

Golgol Fangs-First and the Fenrir of the Amazon campaign do not travel to Europe to join in this great moot. Golgol sends a messenger via moon bridge — the young Ragabash Runs-Like-Hell — who passes on the High War Chieftain's encouragement and support of the crusade. This is coupled with Golgol's regret for his inability to spare any troops to join in the fight.

While the remainder of the Get of Fenris falls to the Wyrm, Golgol's contingent in the Amazon avoids the fate of its tribemates. Those who avoid Harano upon hearing the fate of the rest of the tribe either hurl themselves with renewed ferocity against the forces of the Wyrm in the Amazon, or travel to northern Europe to join the rest of the Garou crusade against the Pure.

heel, killing him and routing the Shadow Lords from several nearby caerns.

With the Shadow Lords on their heels, the Pure and their allies turn south, toward Greece.

Great Fenris

The Urge Wyrms order their Maeljin Incarna servants to attack Fenris and imprison him. Ordinarily Fenris would have scores of Garou defenders, but the fall of his tribe leaves him nearly alone — the loyal Fenrir are either busy in the Amazon or Asia, or they launch a crusade against the Pure in Europe. Only one or two packs make their way to the Tribal Homeland at Fenris' call. Those werewolves are destroyed or driven off. All that remain are the Einherjar — the ancestor-spirits of the Get of Fenris. Legions of Einherjar fall before the army of the Maeljin, but more than half of the Maeljin Incarnae themselves are destroyed, including Knight Entropy and Lady Aife.

In the end, the Nameless Angel of Despair imprisons Great Fenris, chaining him around the neck with dread silver and dragging him bodily to Malfeas. Even there, Great Fenris never truly surrenders to the Wyrm. Should the Garou prove victorious in the final battle, Great Fenris can be rescued from Malfeas; if they lose, Fenris strains at his collar and snaps at his jailers until the universe itself is no more.

...And The Black Spiral Dancers

There is no special enmity between the Pure and homid or lupus Dancers. With very few exceptions, however, the Pure do not tolerate metis Black Spirals — even when those Black Spirals are among the most powerful of the tribe. This is a situation that other tribes may be able to take advantage of once they learn of it; should they know of a powerful Black Spiral metis, they can be assured that few of the Pure participate in raids it leads. Cunning Ragabash and other agents provocateur in the Garou Nation set the Pure against particularly powerful metis Dancers, as well, in an attempt to destabilize the already chaotic and insane alliance.

Apocalypse

After the Pure take Greece from the Furies, they waste no time consolidating their gains. Rather than pushing directly east into Silver Fang Russia, they set up a defensive perimeter of sorts and assault North America via moon bridge.

By this time the humans of the world know that something horribly dangerous is taking place, but the Delirium and the Veil prevent them from entirely understanding it. Riots wash over much of Europe and the cities of the eastern seaboard of North America, but unless the Pure and the Wyrm's other forces find tactical advantage in destroying human habitation or slaughtering innocents — and don't misunderstand, some of them *do* find tactical advantage in those things — this war mostly takes place between Gaian forces and Wyrmish ones. Mortal militaries don't get into the mix so much, in this scenario. The forces of Gaia must save the world alone.

Glass Walkers

Sobriquet: Raiders

Foreshadowing

As discussed in Book of the City, sufficiently huge corporations with unique identities and characteristics can evoke Corporate Father spirits that are similar to City Father spirits in many of the important ways. They are Weaver-aspected spirits that reflect the corporation's collective self-image, public image, and history. According to Garou mystics, only the very largest corporations could possibly awaken in this fashion. In this scenario, only one corporation in the world has a strong enough internal identity to awaken a Corporate Father spirit.

That corporation is Pentex.

The Pentex Corporate Father, an Incarna born of Weaver and Wyrm energies, dissolves the governing board of the company and arranges for the deaths of the heads of most of the company's subsidiaries, because for all intents and purposes, *it* will hereafter serve as the corporation's governing board and executive suite.

The spirit needs only three months from its "birth" to complete its purge of the upper ranks of the corporation. The first tribe to notice the purge and subsequent changes to Pentex's subsidiaries' activities is the Glass Walkers. Around the same time, obeying the dictates of the Triatic Wyrms that wish to start Gaia's violent destruction and rebirth, the Corporate Father turns its eyes on Cockroach. Cockroach is first and foremost a survivor. And it survives because it adapts.

The First Step

The Pentex Incarna has dozens of employees with access to fantastically powerful magical rituals. It commands many of those employees to devise a new rite. This rite is intended to cut off the Glass Walker Tribal Homeland from the rest of the Near Umbra. The Corporate Father uses Wyrmhole Banes to burrow tunnels from Malfeas into the Glass Walker Homeland. By the time these two things are done, Cockroach's home lacks a connection to any part of the cosmos other than Hell. If the chronicle includes any Glass Walkers with the Ancestors Background (perhaps gained through the events of **Past Lives**), they find that they lose the Background until this change is rectified. This is the first signal any of the Walkers get that something powerfully unusual is going on.

The forces of the Wyrm flood into the Glass Walker Homeland as soon as it is cut off from the rest of the cosmos. Soon Cockroach, the Glass Walker ancestor-spirits, and Cockroach's other spirit servants find themselves surrounded by the nigh-infinite spirit armies of the Wyrm.

Cockroach is, as was mentioned above, a survivor. A relatively short time later — a week at most — the Glass Walkers and Cockroach are assured positions of relative safety during the Wyrm's conquest of Gaia and after the world's presumed reboot. In return, the Glass Walkers agree to serve the Pentex Incarna until the Apocalypse comes to its conclusion.

Some Glass Walkers refuse to serve the Wyrm in any capacity. This is unacceptable from a human resources perspective, and the Pentex Father dispatches packs of Dancer Recovery Specialists and Pentex First Teams to minimize the damage that defecting assets might cause.

Covert Activity

The Raiders, as the Glass Walkers become known, cooperate with various Pentex subsidiaries to accomplish the dozen or so steps that the Pentex Incarna needs to complete to trigger the Apocalypse. They do this with Wolf Skins in place and give very little indication that anything untoward is going on. Most of the conditions that the Pentex Incarna must arrange for are relatively innocuous — the transport of oil to particular sites, alchemical rituals over mountain springs, the publication of a catastrophic series of events in Black Dog's dominant roleplaying game lines, and so on. As each step is completed, Gaian spirits across the world become more agitated, but no Theurge can point to a particular event that is setting them off.

The Raiders give lip service to Gaian ideals throughout this process; they assign a few packs to attend major moots on behalf of the tribe at large, but on the whole the tribe does pull away from the Garou Nation. The Raiders are smart enough to know that they won't *all* be able to fool the other Garou *forever*.

Revealed!

To create the keystone of this set of rituals, the Perfect Metis must walk the Black Spiral and truly come into its inheritance upon the altar of the Wyrm. At this point the Perfect Metis is a few years old — a young adult in metis werewolf terms. It is expected that the Storyteller has customized the Perfect Metis' tribe, nature, and personality at this point; for general purposes, it doesn't matter what the Perfect Metis' tribe is. The Raiders must kidnap him (unless in the Storyteller's chronicle the Perfect Metis is a Glass Walker, in which case the keystone rite had better be something else).

There are too many witnesses in a Garou sept for the kidnapping of the metis to go unnoticed. The Raiders use Gifts and high technology to deflect suspicion from them, but septs are also home to dozens of spirits. Some of them are bound to see the Raiders' Umbral reflections and realize who has really kidnapped the Perfect Metis. Once that realization occurs, the Raiders' web of lies begins to unravel — the wise among the Garou Nation discover the Raiders' true activities and patron.

Open Warfare

The Bone Gnawers feel particularly betrayed — though some Bone Gnawer packs seem to be upset simply because they weren't offered a piece of the action. Regardless, Bone Gnawers across North America and Europe leap to attack Glass Walker and Pentex holdings as soon as the relationship is revealed. The rest of Gaia's warriors join the Bone Gnawers in short order, but the Gnawers remain on the vanguard of the war until the very end. Although many legendary prophecies suggest that the children of Rat may abandon Gaia in Her hour of need, Rat seems utterly devoted to Gaia's protection.

While the war between the Pentex Incarna and the Garou Nation is overt on the plane of typical werewolf activity — the Umbra and the shadowy underworld of the streets of the World of Darkness — the battle remains hidden from human eyes for months. It is only once the Perfect Metis emerges from the Black Spiral that the sky blackens and the Apocalypse begins in earnest.

Cockroach

Cockroach's true nature does not change a great deal when it turns to the service of the Wyrm. The big bug has always had service to itself and its own long-term survival near the top of its priority list. Gaia's survival has been important insofar as without Gaia, Cockroach itself cannot survive. The Pentex Incarna and its servants convince Cockroach and its children that (a) they intend to start the Apocalypse and (b) they believe that there will be room for survivors and victors after the war is over. After that it is simply a matter of contract negotiation before Cockroach steps to the other side of the bloody line between Gaia and the Wyrm.

Apocalypse

After a month or more of shadow war between Pentex and the Raiders on the one side and Gaia's forces on the other, the Perfect Metis emerges from the Black Spiral, aged to full maturity in the period of a single month. Zhyzhak stands at his side; she is hugely pregnant, presumably with the Perfect Metis' seed. The several ways in which this would be impossible appear to be irrelevant. For maximum dramatic effect, the Perfect Metis and Zhyzhak should emerge onto the field of battle where the troupe's pack can be found.

Once the accursed couple has its first victory in battle, the Pentex Incarna is consumed and replaced

by an avatar of the Wyrm itself — the Incarna becomes a Celestine, a true dark god in the Umbra. Thereafter the Pentex Corporate Father subsumes the identities of all the individual employees, spirits and drones that make up all of the subsidiaries of Pentex. They act with a single mind, toward a single focused goal. They speak with one voice and see with thousands of pairs of eyes.

The individual components have the mind of the master, but not the strength. The Garou must defeat the pieces before they can approach the master in Malfeas.

Red Talons

Sobriquet: Predators

Foreshadowing

Ask a Red Talon whether he has ever eaten a human. If you are not a Red Talon, he shrugs the suggestion off, possibly citing the Litany but more likely simply noting that human flesh is too diseased, chemical-ridden, and filthy to serve as a meal for a true predator.

He may be lying, but he's not altogether wrong. Many Red Talons dismiss the Litany when it doesn't suit them, and *Thou Shalt Not Eat the Flesh of Man* is one of those points that doesn't suit them. Human flesh, however, is too filthy to serve as a proper meal for the alpha predator of the world.

In this scenario, human flesh is filthier than even the Red Talons believe. Approximately one percent of the humans in the industrialized parts of the World of Darkness suffer unknowingly from a prion disease (similar to Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease or "Mad Cow" disease) that lays dormant until old age, at which point it simply piles on to the other infirmities that come with old age. It's practically undiscoverable in humanity, since it so rarely attacks healthy children or young adults. And it doesn't have any direct effect on Red Talons or other Garou who consume the flesh of infected humans; the werewolves' immune systems protect them against such a mild disease.

The same cannot be said for the Red Talons' Kinfolk. This prion disease can be transmitted by sharing kills or through sexual intercourse. And in wolves it is a much more serious syndrome. Over the course of a few weeks it infects the wolf's brain, driving it insane before consuming critical proteins in the brain, killing the wolf outright.

It takes the Red Talons months to realize that this disease has begun to spread through their Kinfolk, and by that point it is too late. By the end of 2003, 90% of the remaining wolves across the globe are dead, and with such decimation in their ranks it is likely that *canis lupus* will not return.

As the Red Talons realize that their Kinfolk are essentially dead by the Talons' hands, the tribe goes mad with grief. The tribe declares an immediate pogrom against humanity, blaming industrial food reprocessing for the disease that killed the wolves. Griffin is all too happy to accommodate his children, and quietly abandons Gaia's service for that of the Wyrm.

Open Warfare

The Talons do not immediately set out to make war on the other Garou. In fact they send messengers out to major septs of all the other tribes, who carry the rather preposterous suggestion that the other Garou should simply stand down. After the human population worldwide has been culled down to a reasonable figure of, say, 600 million or so, the Talons will relent and let nature run its course.

The Garou Nation will never stand for this; Albrecht, Konietzko, and other leaders within the Western Concordiat declare that such an act will bring war upon the Red Talons.

Nevertheless, a few packs comprising the eldest and most respected Talons concoct a plan to slaughter most of humanity. These packs are dominated by those from the Sept of the First Rage (see **Tribebook: Red Talons**) and also include a few packs of Winter Garou — those Talons that have taken on the sacred task of covertly killing humans.

Most Red Talons — now the "Predators" — do not have contacts or allies within government, science labs, or the military. The tribe cannot easily bring about the deaths of millions of humans at the humans' own hands. The Predators do not wish to destroy humans and irretrievably poison Gaia and Her ecosystems, either, so nuclear weapons are out, as is the release of human-created bioweapons.

Therefore they must create their own natural disaster (or disasters). The Predators intend to awaken ancient spirits of the deepest earth along the Aleutian island chain and the deep-ocean Aleutian trench. This should have two primary effects: First, it should trigger earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis across the Pacific Ocean — and given that at least a billion people live within a hundred miles of the Pacific, that would be a pretty good start.

There is a very serious secondary consequence to this action. Very few Talons have the education to understand it from a scientific perspective, but many of them receive prophetic spirit-messages suggesting it. Ten trillion (yes, ten trillion) tons of carbon are trapped in methane at the bottom of the ocean floor across the world. Most of these are in deep oceanic trenches, where the conditions are right to form methane clathrates — ice structures that trap methane. If these ice structures are disturbed by seismic shifts such as earthquakes or

major eruptions, however, they could release millions of gallons of methane gas into the atmosphere.

Methane is an explosive, and is also a greenhouse gas. If it doesn't explode (which would kill millions), coastlines will flood around the world at a much faster pace than ever before.

Gaia's spirit forces do not sit idle during this time. The warriors of Gaia receive visions of their own, and hundreds of Garou make their way northward. Margrave Konietzko challenges Albrecht's claim to lead this vanguard north. In a combat challenge lasting more than a day, Konietzko defeats Albrecht — though he does not kill the King nor take his crown. He simply takes leadership of the march north, leaving Albrecht to know who, in the final balance, is the truly dominant werewolf.

Griffin

Griffin, like his tribe, goes mad with rage. He's uncomfortably close to serving the Wyrm anyway, in this scenario, so he almost unconsciously joins the Wyrm's forces in order to avenge his tribe's losses upon Gaia.

...And The Black Spiral Dancers

The Talons do not involve themselves with the Black Spiral Dancers until the war is in full swing (see below). Until that time they do not see themselves as servants of the Wyrm. After they declare war on humanity and accept the boons of the Wyrm, the Predators show themselves willing to work with the Dancers as necessary, but the two tribes are not boon companions.

Apocalypse

Dozens of Predator packs make their way north to the Aleutians, each intent on awakening one major spirit along the fault line. They are met by Gaian Garou who have at least a vague idea of their plan. At this point the Black Spiral Dancers and the rest of the forces of the Wyrm join in on the Talons' side and everything gets violent.

Gaia's fate hangs by a string in this scenario. If only a few packs of Predators can trigger a set of eruptions, a chain reaction begins that dooms at least a billion humans. Given that this is the Apocalypse, a few packs succeed. The Pacific Rim dies over the next few weeks.

Most of the Predators die with it — the earthquakes and volcanoes that the tribe triggers are indiscriminate forces of nature. The spirits that they awaken have little affection for either Gaia or the Wyrm; they only wish to erupt, to release the great stores of energy locked in the planet's stone. When clouds of methane over the North Pacific start exploding, they kill three-quarters of the werewolves of all tribes in the Aleutians. This includes Margrave Konietzko, who fights alongside his fellow warriors to the bitter end.

The rest of this Apocalypse is dire and yet strangely personal to the surviving werewolves. Only around half of the Garou Nation survives (the survivors of the Aleutians plus those that remained behind, led by King Albrecht). Most of the Predators, who instigated the final battle, also die in the Aleutians. The surviving Garou face hordes of Wyrm creatures across the world, many of whom take strength from the orgy of destruction throughout the Pacific. Though the other Fera may throw their lot in with the Garou in the end, and even some of the Predators may return to the fold in the darkest day, the odds are not in Gaia's favor in this scenario.

Shadow Lords

Sobriquet: Shadow Lords

Foreshadowing

In the most ancient days, Grandfather Thunder was Gaia's consort. Some Shadow Lords' stories suggest that Thunder rejected Gaia's love in order to raise their children, the Shadow Lords, to a position of power over the rest of the Garou Nation. Stoically Thunder rejected his distant lover's caresses and entreaties, eternally whirling just out of her reach in order to devote himself to the Wyrm's defeat and his children's success.

That certainly sounds appropriate, coming from the Shadow Lords. Events of more recent days might not bear them out. In recent years, perhaps Gaia finally turned her gaze away from Grandfather Thunder; or perhaps Gaia had never been the one rejected.

In the wake of the appearance of the Red Star, Grandfather Thunder suggests to Gaia that he should be elevated to Celestine in order to counter the power of Anthelios and the coming Apocalypse. Bemused by this, Gaia tells Thunder that She will elevate him if he — through his beloved children — proves himself worthy of such power. Arrogantly, Thunder declares himself ready for any challenge.

Gaia names Her test, and gives the Shadow Lords one year — from midsummer 2004 to midsummer 2005 (or any convenient pair of dates, as the Storyteller prefers) — to complete it. Storytellers should be sure to note the absence of many Shadow Lords from their usual duties and activities (as well as much politicking and scheming). If questioned, most Shadow Lords answer as honestly as possible — they're attempting to prepare for the Apocalypse by performing a great service for Gaia and Grandfather Thunder. Lords under Rank Three do not understand the significance of the test and assume that the simple description just given is the truth. Shadow Lords of Rank Three or higher understand what's going on, at least to some degree, but do not share their knowledge with lesser creatures (non-Shadow Lords) or those whom they outrank.

The Test

Truly, the test could be anything, so long as it is difficult enough that a large fraction of a tribe's power and influence would be required to accomplish it. And, of course, the Shadow Lords must fail. Here are some possibilities.

• The Shadow Lords must aid another tribe in a fashion that changes the tribe forever. For instance, they might be assigned to find the Silent Striders' ancestor spirits, or cure the Silver Fangs' madness.

• The Shadow Lords must make peace with the Fera across the globe, no matter the cost.

• The tribe must destroy or forever banish one of the three heads of the Triatic Wyrm, just as the Croatan did, centuries ago.

The First Step

The Shadow Lords fail their test. The year passes and they cannot complete the deed. Worse, by single-mindedly obeying Grandfather Thunder's ultimate dictate, the Shadow Lords leave much of their more mundane work undone throughout the year. Thus the Shadow Lords' enemies (within the Garou Nation as well as among the forces of the Wyrm and Weaver) are far stronger by the end of the test than before, and the Shadow Lords are themselves weaker. Many Shadow Lords fall into Harano, stricken with horror at their own failure.

Gaia rejects Thunder, leaving him an Incarna. Filled with rage at his rejection, and seeing his children accosted on all sides, Grandfather Thunder pushes the Shadow Lords into attacking the forces of Gaia. They do not — at first — embrace the Wyrm itself; they simply lash out at their former allies.

Revealed!

This goes on for less than a month before all werewolves recognize the betrayal of the Shadow Lords. The rest of the Garou (and many Gaian spirits) assume that Thunder and the Shadow Lords have taken sides with the Wyrm against Gaia and Albrecht declares the tribe anathema. Truly beset on all sides, Thunder now throws his lot in with the Wyrm and its forces. Unlike in many of the other tribal fall scenarios in this chapter, the Shadow Lords' patron's sudden shift of allegiance explodes outward through the spirit world and Realm as the echo of distant thunder. Few Shadow Lords escape this shove into the Wyrm's service — the only ones who do escape it are those cut off from the spirit world in some fashion when Thunder goes over to the Wyrm.

Open Warfare

The Shadow Lords, led by Margrave Konietzko and the infiltrator Whispers in Darkness, systematically corrupt the great alliance that Konietzko created in the Balkans. Having worked with the other werewolves of the region as an ally for a handful of years now, Konietzko knows many personal weaknesses of the local Furies and Talons, as well as the location of some of their more closely-guarded caerns. The Shadow Lords undermine their allies, and strike out at their European holdings, rapidly consolidating their gains and threatening Black Fury holdings in Greece.

...And The Black Spiral Dancers

As his children attack werewolves and Gaian spirits across the globe, Grandfather Thunder assaults Whippoorwill. Thunder sees Whippoorwill as a hindrance in the war effort — too insane, too corrupt, and too weak. With so much Black Spiral Dancers worship spread among the myriad Wyrm-totems rather than going solely to Whippoorwill, the Black Spiral Dancers' totem has no chance against the mighty essence of Storm; in just a few days Whippoorwill is rent apart, utterly destroyed. Grandfather Thunder absorbs the Spiral totem's Gnosis and power, and declares himself master of all werewolves who serve the Wyrm. Some refuse to serve this new master, and either find minor Banes to serve as pack totems, or are destroyed. Within a few weeks, there are no Black Spiral Dancers. There are only Shadow Lords.

Apocalypse

Grandfather Thunder uses his influence over the skies of the world to bring darkness over all human habitation. Humans get weird enough after a few days with no sunlight that things get violent in a very short time. To complicate matters, under cover of constant darkness, vampires crawl like cockroaches out from under every building in every major city of the world, and Banes once locked away from the light of Helios and Luna infect humans with hatred and terror.

The armies of Shadow attack human habitation and weak Garou septs across the globe — they start in Eastern Europe and expand into Russia right away. Russian Garou, still relatively weak from the battle to reclaim Russia from the Shadow Curtain, cannot withstand the Shadow Lords' assault. They fall back north and northwest, into the lands of the Fenrir, and the Lords take several Russian caerns. From there, the servants of Thunder and the Wyrm awaken any Zmei they can find — just to cause chaos — while the fallen Garou themselves push southward into Arab lands. They have every intention of trying to start a nuclear war.

Thunder himself sends hordes of Stormcrows to attack Helios, who he sees as his chief rival for Gaia's affections. As the final battle approaches, Thunder engages Helios directly; the storms part around the world as their essence rises to engulf Helios in an epic,

ever-fluctuating eclipse. This could give Gaian Garou their first opening, as the sun — even darkened by Thunder's attacks — destroys many Banes and vampires, and drives scores of others back into hiding.

Silent Striders

Sobriquet: The Hungry Ghosts

Foreshadowing

In 1998 a young Strider named Bennu became the first Silent Strider to hear the voice of a Strider ancestor-spirit since the Thirteenth Egyptian Dynasty. Over the next five years, elders of the Striders learned that Bennu was not alone, and only slowly discovered why it was happening.

Elder Striders believed that the storms that erupted in the Dark Umbra in 1999 were directly related to the return of the Silent Striders' ancestor-spirits, but it was impossible for them to determine whether this was the case. They would have to find the Umbral Silent Strider Tribal Homeland.

The Silent Striders hardly have a ruling council, or anything so organized, but many of the elders of the tribe convened a late-summer moot at the Caern of the Wheel of Ptah in Casablanca in 2003. At this moot, six packs of Silent Striders volunteered to explore the far reaches of the universe for their Tribal Homeland. Four packs (the Wind Runners, Speedy Delivery, the Bored Ghosts, and Owl's Talons) would travel into the Near Umbra — Owl's Talons into Malfeas itself — while two (the Pale Strangers and the Still Waters) would brave the storms of the Underworld.

Three packs returned — the Still Waters from the Underworld, and the Wind Runners and Bored Ghosts from the Near Umbra. Speedy Delivery never returned and is presumed slain; Owl's Talons were lost to the Wyrm in Malfeas. The Still Waters reported that the Pale Strangers were lost to a massive, hundred-mile entity in the Dark Umbra. This... thing... was at the epicenter of the great storms that swept the Shadowlands, and it appeared to be the storms' cause. The few ghosts that the Striders encountered told nightmarish stories of this creature, which they called Grandmother. The Striders openly wondered if it might not be Sutekh.

The other packs' travels indicated that the Strider Tribal Homeland abuts the Dark Umbra in a previously unknown fashion. Apparently the chthonic creature's slow rousing has dislodged the seal that Set's magic had placed on the Homeland. That dislodging in turn allowed a few ancestor-spirits to escape the Strider Homeland and attend to those cubs that hadn't yet closed themselves to the possibility of their ancestors' return.

At the same time, the other two Strider packs found that all of

the Wyrmish Umbral Realms they encountered were full of spirits preparing for war. The Eye of the Wyrm is open and the Prophecy of the Phoenix is at hand. But the Silent Striders feel that the Garou Nation cannot fight both the Wyrm and this abyssal behemoth simultaneously.

The First Step

The Children of Owl take a dangerous first step. They decide that the Silent Striders can bring the forces of the Wyrm into conflict with Grandmother, in the hopes that the Garou Nation could defeat the winner of that struggle. Dozens of Striders give themselves up, willingly, either to the Black Spiral or through the Ritual of Dormant Wisdom. A few packs rebel from this decision, and run to the cover of other powerful septs to announce the activities of their brethren.

Covert Activity

Relatively rational and coherent — if not entirely sane after the walk into the Wyrm's arms — the newly-christened Hungry Ghosts find it easy to dominate the insane and slavering Black Spiral Dancers. While other spirits are more difficult to persuade and lead, the Hungry Ghosts have a simple trump card: they can simply show Grandmother to the forces of their new master. Using the Rite of Descent into the Underworld, the Hungry Ghosts show three of the Maeljin Incarnae this hungry leviathan of the Shadowlands, and that seems to suffice for them. Believing now that Grandmother poses a threat as a rival to their master, the Maeljin Incarna and the Urge Wyrms turn their attention to the lands of the dead.

Revealed!

The Garou Nation, as led by Albrecht and Konietzko, chooses this moment — as the Wyrm is staging its attacks into the lands of the dead — to strike at the Hungry Ghosts and Black Spiral Dancers. Faced with allies of questionable trustworthiness in the Dancers and Wyrm spirits, lurching into the hostile territory of the Lands of the Dead, and now facing an assault from the rear, the Hungry Ghosts do what the Silent Striders promised themselves they'd never do: They turn and attack their former allies in the Garou Nation.

Open Warfare

The Hungry Ghosts have a weapon no other tribe can match: The Caern of the Wheel of Ptah is one of the most powerful caerns in the world, and it is directly connected via moon bridge to every noteworthy caern on Gaia's surface. When open warfare begins between the Hungry Ghosts and the Gaian werewolves, all moon bridges connecting Garou caerns to the Wheel of Ptah slam shut — possibly trapping a few Garou in transit. No Gaian Garou can activate the moon bridges that connect to the Wheel of Ptah.

The Hungry Ghosts themselves can use the moon bridges as they wish, and stage lightning raids against Garou caerns across the world with no geographic pattern — first an attack in Russia, then Africa, then Hungary, then to the United States. At the same time, Wyrmish energies begin flooding outward along the moon bridge paths from the Wheel of Ptah. Most powerful caerns (level 3 and higher) are immune to these emanations save for uncomfortable wildlife and spirit life, and a few more ghosts in the area. Many level 1 caerns fall to the Wyrm within a month of the corruption of the Wheel of Ptah, and half of all level 2 caerns are corrupted within three months of the Silent Striders' fall. Further damage of this nature is largely prevented after that point, as a rogue Gaian Strider pack is able to pass along the Rite of the Burning Bridge (see p. 198), which permanently destroys moon bridges and prevents corrupted bridges from harming Gaian caerns to which they are attached.

Owl

Owl loves his children right up until the point that they turn to the Wyrm. As each Silent Strider performs the Rite of Dormant Wisdom or enters the paths that lead to the Black Spiral, an apparition of Owl briefly confronts him; he must deliberately turn away from Owl to continue. The Hungry Ghosts' new tribal totem is Bat — the fallen, Wyrmish Bat, not the redeemed aspect of the totem.

Several Silent Strider packs do remain loyal to Gaia and to Owl; those packs continue to receive Owl's blessing, though the loss of his tribe is clearly a great blow to the totem. When the final battle comes, Owl engages Bat over the Umbral battlefield; victory in this battle (whoever claims it) is a great omen for the overall war.

Apocalypse

The Hungry Ghosts' familiarity with their former allies' homes is a great wartime asset. Several of the greatest leaders of the Garou Nation fall in the darkness, victims of the Striders' d'siah fetish knives (the precise identities of these leaders are left to the Storyteller's needs, though it is strongly recommended that at the least, either Konietzko or Albrecht dies).

The Ghosts' mobility is a still greater asset, and a successful war against the Hungry Ghosts and their allies requires an assault on the Wheel of Ptah in Morocco. This won't be easy; the Hungry Ghosts and all their allies fall back to this critical site at the first sign of trouble. That may give the Garou an advantage, however, as the Gaian forces may be able to feint an attack against Casablanca in order to gain an edge elsewhere.

The final battle itself should involve Sutekh in some fashion — he may be this Grandmother creature, or he may be an equally titanic god-vampire on his own

merits. The Cult of Sutekh (vampires known to other vampires as the Followers of Set) should become involved as well. The Cult of Sutekh may ally with their former enemies, but it is more likely that they attempt to play both sides against the middle (a stance that savvy Garou may be able to take advantage of). If Sutekh itself is not Grandmother, then those two creatures may emerge into the Umbral or physical battlefield, along with Owl and Bat.

For the day to end in victory for Gaia, the Hungry Ghosts must be destroyed, and Sutekh and Grandmother must be vanquished as well (if they make an appearance and are separate entities). Two or more godlings on a battlefield are sure to lay waste to hundreds of miles in all directions — any victory is sure to come at great cost.

Silver Fangs

Sobriquet: The Fiery Crown

Foreshadowing

King Albrecht is the most aware Silver Fang king in centuries. He knows that his tribe suffers greatly from the endless mixing and remixing of the same Kinfolk bloodlines over the course of centuries. The tribe's attention keeps getting pulled away from the here and now and off into quixotic quests and challenges that haven't existed for centuries.

Albrecht has heard the prophecies; he has seen the Eye of the Wyrm and heard tales of the Perfect Metis. He knows that the Apocalypse will arrive before the end of his reign as king, and suspects that it will arrive before 2006.

Albrecht also has his eye on Margrave Konietzko. He knows that the iron wolf of the Balkans would gladly lead the Shadow Lords into battle at the forefront of the Garou Nation, trampling upon the faltering Silver Fangs. Neither Albrecht nor his advisors have any desire to experience this — not out of rivalry with the Shadow Lords but simply because the Fangs believe it to be their unique burden to lead the remaining Twelve Tribes into the Final Battle.

With assistance from the elders of the tribe, the king decides to call upon Great Falcon himself for aid. He summons all loyal Silver Fangs to the Sept of the Crescent Moon in Russia in order to proffer a great sacrifice to Great Falcon. Hundreds of Fangs participate in the ritual, each one giving up his most treasured fetish — in many cases, relics dating back hundreds of years.

Great Falcon appears, incarnate. Albrecht personally beseeches Falcon to open his children's eyes, to clear the poison of the Silver Fangs' blood and enable them to take their rightful place among the Garou as the Apocalypse begins. Falcon accepts the sacrifice, and removes the Silver Fangs' derangements for a year and a day.

With their new awareness, the Silver Fang kings, lords, and knights survey the world around them as if for the first time. Days of frenzied planning and war councils follow. During these days, Falcon disappears. No Garou is quite certain to where the great spirit retires — most assume it is the Silver Fangs' Tribal Homeland realm — but Great Falcon is out of touch for quite some time.

The First Step

The Silver Fangs mount an all-out assault on the Black Spiral Dancer caverns of Scotland, as well as those tunnels that connect the Scottish caverns with the European mainland. The Silver Fangs are a ruthless, tightly disciplined, terrifyingly organized and effective fighting force. They accept no aid from other tribes. When the Get of Fenris Philodox Thunder's Teeth directly confronts Albrecht to discuss the Fenrir's role in this crusade, Albrecht rebuffs him, explaining that this is something that the Silver Fangs feel that they must do to prove their worth in light of their new awareness. Thunder's Teeth accepts his excuse.

Within a matter of weeks, the heart has been cut out of the Black Spiral Dancer tribe.

Revealed!

Thunder's Teeth returns to the High King, asking what the Silver Fangs' plans are for the rest of the Garou Nation.

Albrecht explains that the Silver Fangs' new awareness has made it clear to them that the Garou Nation cannot possibly hope to win the war to save Gaia. The Silver Fangs destroyed the Black Spiral Dancers, Albrecht continues, because they felt the Dancers to be inferior allies, not worthy of the continued attention of the Wyrm at whose feet the Silver Fangs — now the Fiery Crown — prostrate themselves. The Silver Fangs will find themselves victorious in the War of the Apocalypse, because they have chosen to abandon a losing cause.

With this, Albrecht and Thunder's Teeth engage in a lengthy duel that ends with the Fenrir's death.

Open Warfare

Within a day of the duel, Thunderwyrms erupt from their pits across the globe, and the forces of the Wyrm assault the Garou and humanity on all sides. The Fiery Crown and Bloody King Albrecht serve as the Wyrm's vanguard. The Fiery Crown's most powerful Theurges begin a powerful ritual that takes at least a full month to complete, and the rest of the tribe attacks various Garou caerns in force to distract Gaian Garou from this ritual.

Margrave Konietzko is named High King of the Garou, and the alliance he built in the Balkans serves as the core of the Garou army of the End.

Falcon

Falcon's act — the removal of the Fangs' delusions and derangements — comes at a price. Gaia Herself caused the Silver Fangs' weakness, for She has decreed since time immemorial that cousins who breed too closely breed weak offspring. Great Falcon believes that he can wipe this flaw away without breaking the balance of the world. Great Falcon is wrong, a mistake reflected in the Silver Fangs' later behavior. The terrible clarity the Silver Fangs receive is in a sense the truth — the Wyrm's strength is terrible beyond measure, and the Apocalypse may not be winnable by Gaian Garou. In a sense, Great Falcon's hubris dooms his children. After the Silver Fangs turn to the Wyrm, Falcon realizes his terrible error. In shame and horror he flies away, deep into the Umbra and never to return — he is lost to the Garou even if they should win the War of the Apocalypse.

...And The Black Spiral Dancers

The Spirals are exterminated. A few packs here and there might persist — the most cunning, secretive, or powerful. These serve the Wyrm as best they can, but they know they no longer hold the great destroyer's affections. One pack — a Ragabash-dominated pack known as the Childslayers, allied with the Nameless Angel of Despair — approaches a pack of Gaian Garou (perhaps the players' pack) with information about the Wyrm's plans (as described below, and other details to fit the Storyteller's chronicle). The Childslayers hope to sell this information (and possibly their own service) in return for vengeance upon the Fiery Crown.

Apocalypse

The worst of the fighting takes place in Eastern Europe. Margrave Konietzko's force is based in the Balkans; the Fiery Crown's power base lies at most a few hundred miles away, in Russia. War surges back and forth along the north side of the Black Sea — and even onto the Black Sea itself.

The Fiery Crown's final plot is to use the Planetary Incarna Rorg to smash Gaia's surface and kill the majority of humanity. This is the true nature of the great ritual that the tribe began performing the day that Albrecht killed Thunder's Teeth. The rite brings an enormous, kilometer-long "dinosaur-killer" sized asteroid to strike at the heart of a continental landmass. The Fiery Crown isn't picky as to which landmass and the Storyteller should choose the continent that fits her chronicle best.

When the asteroid impacts it releases energy comparable to a gigaton (1,000 megaton) nuclear warhead.

On the Black Sea

Russian and Ukrainian navies on the Black Sea are severely depleted, both understaffed and stripped nearly bare. Garou on both sides attempt to take advantage of this situation; they use the Black Sea for rapid transport when moon bridges are not available. In one memorable instance, a pack of Glass Walkers from Istanbul steal an old *Kirov*-class Russian cruiser from mothballs in the port of Sevastopol. With clever planning and improvisational use of Glass Walker Gifts and fetishes, the pack manages to bombard Wyrm positions for a full two hours before the so-called BlackSeaFor international naval coalition sinks them.

A 10-kilometer diameter impact crater is created and everything therein is instantly destroyed. Tectonic events are sure to take place after such an impact, for it is likely that the crust of the earth cracks under such force. This rock is comparable in size to that which struck the Yucatan 65 million years ago, killing 90% of the biomass of the Earth. (This event may play neatly into the events of the *Ragnarok* scenario.)

Stopping the Crown's ritual prevents the impact — though smaller asteroids might still bombard the world's surface; somehow persuading Rorg to avert his assault could also stop it. It is extraordinarily unlikely that a pack of Garou could find themselves aboard a space-mission to avert the asteroid's impact, but if that is the sort of game the Storyteller wants to run, that too is a possibility.

Even they avert the asteroid impact, Gaia's warriors must defeat the Fiery Crown and its allies. Impact or no, the war seems likely to culminate in a battle high in the Balkans, or in Russia or the Ukraine. It could take place against the backdrop of a decimated countryside, with millions dead — in which case victory for the Garou means that Gaia must guide life to rebuild from the worst possible conditions. Or it could take place after an averted asteroid strike, which would mean that a victory for the Garou leads to peace and joy for all living things.

Uktena

Sobriquet: Snakes

Foreshadowing

In 2001 the servants of the Triatic Wyrms hold a great, dark moot in the expanse of Malfeas. The three tentacles that make up the Triatic Wyrm come to an understanding that the Apocalypse is to begin. (Whether this is part of the Wyrm's consciousness that echoes outward into the Triatic Wyrm or whether the Wyrm no longer *has* an individual consciousness is a matter for the

Storyteller. The Urge Wyrms, if asked, point only as far back as Eater-of-Souls, Beast-of-War, and the Defiler.) Awareness of the agreement among the three Triatic Wyrms emanates out and down to the Urge Wyrms, who in turn spur their Maeljin Incarna servants into action.

The Maeljin Incarnae — never one another's allies — each select a single Garou tribal totem and attempt to pervert it to the service of the Wyrm, knowing that a tribe's corruption can serve as the anchor tied to a chain that drags the world into the Apocalypse.

Lady Aife, the servant of the Urge of Cruelty, claims the downtrodden Uktena tribe as her target. Most of the other Maeljin Incarna spend at least a third of their energy interfering with one another's plans. Maine duBois (servant of the Urge of Lies) and Doge Klypse (who serves Paranoia), who claim the Glass Walkers and Silver Fangs respectively, immunize their target tribes by spending *all* of their efforts trying to negate their rivals' activities rather than actively trying to corrupt their targets.

Lady Aife spends none of her energy attacking her rivals, and very little of her energy protecting her own assets. She knows that successfully corrupting the Uktena guarantees her a seat at the Wyrm's right hand, and concentrates all of her efforts on that task. She starts late in 2003, and takes three main tacks.

First, Aife sends Dream Makers to sap the will of the Uktena Bane Tender camp — these Garou sit for hours or days at a time, basking in the warm Wyrmish energies of powerful Banes. Aife's Dream Makers give the Bane Tenders pleasant daydreams — at first — and slowly pull them down the road toward thinking that the Banes they watch might not be all *that* important...

Second, Aife sends dozens of Wyrmhole Banes to the Uktena Tribal Homeland, led by a fallen Uktena pack (the Serpents). Wyrmhole Banes punch holes through the mythic boundaries of the Homeland and into Scar and Malfeas, allowing hundreds of other Banes to pour into the Tribal Homeland, corrupting ancestor-spirits and Great Uktena itself.

Third, Aife sends a few precious packs of Black Spiral Dancers to assault caerns under the protection of the indigenous North American Garou directly. The Spirals receive instructions telling them to attack both Wendigo and Uktena caerns, each time concealing themselves as members of the other tribe. This leads to mistrust between the two indigenous tribes.

By March of 2004, the Uktena tribe is up in arms. Several Bane Tenders, including Ayita Stormcrow of the Sept of the Grandfather, have swung to the side of the Wyrm; the Tribal Homeland is unreachable and the ancestor-spirits seem corrupt; Great Uktena itself is slow to respond to requests for aid; and the Uktena's traditional allies have begun to spy upon them, expecting attacks or worse.

Keep in mind that most of the other tribes are facing similar problems at this point, as the other Maeljin Incarna have the same goal that Aife does. Across the entire Garou Nation, uncertainty and mistrust reign. The Glass Walkers and Silver Fangs, for reasons described above, are in the best shape of any tribe, but even they experience the same generally chaotic atmosphere that all the tribes suffer from.

The First Step

The alpha of an Uktena caern in southern California dies under mysterious circumstances. (The choice of caern is left to the Storyteller, based on his chronicle's needs.) Nearby tribes with wealth and local holdings — the Glass Walkers, Silver Fangs, Children of Gaia and Black Furies — each push to gain influence in the sept. Afraid of losing influence with so many other caerns on the wane, the local Uktena turn to some of their allies in the Bane Tenders of Death Valley for assistance.

The Bane Tenders are more than half-corrupt at this point, given a season's influence by Dream Makers and a mostly fallen tribal totem Incarna anyway. They provide the local Uktena with challenge assistance through the Rite of the Bright Candle (see Appendix). The fallen Tenders bind a number of Banes into fetishes for their tribemates, and release a few of the more subtle Banes that they'd until recently been holding prisoner (including the Bane prince Arranakh, called "Friend-Twister"). The released Banes and dark fetishes spread throughout the Uktena tribe, rapidly turning pack after pack and sept after sept to the service of the Wyrm. With each of the other tribes fighting their own internal battles — except for the Glass Walkers and Silver Fangs, who otherwise have their hands full — the Uktena fall to the Wyrm without any allies rushing to save them.

Covert Activity and Revelation

As the tribes do in most of these fall scenarios, the Uktena spend some time mopping up their uncorrupted tribemates. Roughly a month into this period the Uktena lose the attention of Lady Aife, who ascends to directly lead the Wyrm's torture of Great Uktena. She returns to the war itself once Uktena emerges (see below). In the meantime, many Uktena work to subvert the strongest tribes in Gaia's service, and instigate deceptions in order to set the Glass Walkers and Silver Fangs against one another.

Albrecht's perception, coupled with strange half-mad Silver Fang visions and Glass Walker technology, reveal the deception of the Uktena. Albrecht rallies the rest of the tribes to his cause and, with Konietzko's

honest assistance, pushes the Twelve Tribes to dig out the corruption instigated by the Maeljin Incarnae.

Open Warfare

At this time, Great Uktena emerges from his imprisonment. Joined by dozens of great freed Banes (formerly under the care of the Bane Tenders), Lady Aife leads thousands of perverted Uktena spirits, the Uktena tribe, and the Black Spiral Dancers in open war against the Garou.

The Uktena fight for North America first, for that is where they are strongest. Their greatest strength lies across the southern half of the United States, leading to battles from the Everglades into the Appalachians, the Louisiana Bayou and the Ozarks, west across the plains of Texas and Oklahoma and into the deserts of New Mexico and Arizona. Some Black Spiral Dancers and Wyrmish spirit allies occupy Garou across most of the rest of the Americas, while the Dancers lead fallen Garou from other tribes in Asia, Europe and Africa to keep their brethren from launching a large attack against the Americas.

Great Uktena

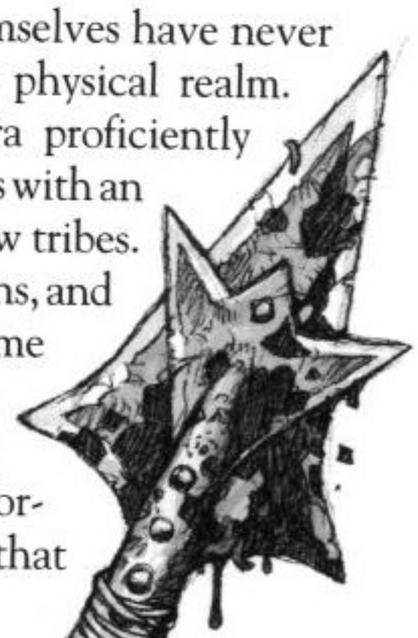
The forces of the Wyrm conquer Great Uktena's home, and the totem spirit itself is enslaved and tormented by the forces of the Wyrm for months. When it emerges from its imprisonment it is a servant of the darkness. It remains the patron of its fallen tribe; its emergence from imprisonment is a dark omen for the rest of the Garou Nation. Rivers flood or dry up across North America, and thousands of Uktena Jagglings rush into the Near Umbra and even into the Realm to wreak havoc against Gaia and Her servants.

...And The Black Spiral Dancers

The Uktena and Dancers fight as allies, though it is clear that Aife favors her adopted children and gives them preferential treatment, the finest fetishes and Gifts previously unknown to the Dancers. The Black Spirals are essentially muscle, while the Snakes are an elite corps of spirit-wielding assassins and a magical strike force *par excellence*.

Apocalypse

The Snakes themselves have never been masters of the physical realm. They use the Umbra proficiently and manipulate spirits with an ability matched by few tribes. Ancient fetishes, talens, and spirit bargains all come into play as the Snakes drive their new master's plan forward. Garou may find that



old fetishes handed down from Uktena no longer function at all, or are unwilling to strike against descendants of those Garou who originally bound them. Some may even be affected by Great Uktena's perversion, and become Wyrm fetishes themselves. And in any event, no fight against the fallen Uktena takes place without assaults from the spirit world — the pack's totem is never quite safe once the pack enters combat.

If the Snakes and their allies push the Garou Nation back on its heels, the final battle is at the Sept of the Crescent Moon in Russia, with a possible second front against Glass Walker holdings in India. If the Garou gain the upper hand, which doesn't seem likely given the attrition they face throughout this scenario, the Wyrm's final battle takes place in the Grand Canyon, in Arizona.

Wendigo

Sobriquet: The Devourers

Foreshadowing

The Wendigo have never had much affection for the rest of the Garou Nation. Certainly there was once a deep trust and love for the Uktena, but that died with the Croatan. There's sympathy for the Red Talons, which is reciprocated to a degree, but not much more than that. The Wendigo have always walked alone. This trait turns out to bite them, hard.

A roadblock across tribal lands off of I-90 in upstate New York in the winter of 2003-2004 leads to a confrontation between New York National Guard and armed reservation-bound natives. It's never quite clear who fires the first shot, but in the end, two Guardsmen are dead, and so are thirteen indigenous people of various tribes.

The Glacier Wind pack of Wendigo, led by the Galliard Walking Bird, takes matters into its own hands at this point. The Glacier Wind is one of the most renowned packs of the Warpath camp of the Wendigo tribe, and they have no interest in coddling the Wyrmcomers. They hunger for vengeance.

The Glacier Wind uses spirits of the icy ocean to locate an American *Seawolf*-class nuclear submarine, the *USS Jimmy Carter*, under the Arctic ice pack. Using a host of unique fetishes and talens, including the Water Walk Amulet (see Appendix), the eight members of Glacier Wind step through the Umbra and onto the *Carter*. Using their innate Gifts, the Glacier Wind pack massacres the crew of the *Carter*.

It is December 20, 2004, the night before Midwinter. At this point none of the Glacier Wind pack has fallen to the Wyrm.

The First Step

Walking Bird uses the Gifts: Mindspeak and Head Games to pull the launch codes from the minds of the *Carter*'s crew. One of his packmates uses Control Complex Machines, learned from a Glass Walker, to reprogram *Carter*'s warhead and missile guidance codes. Their target is Buffalo, New York. Less than two hours after the Glacier Wind reaches the *Jimmy Carter*, a ballistic missile leaves the sub. Five minutes after that its 25-megaton warhead explodes in the sky above Buffalo, New York. The city center is entirely destroyed and more than 300,000 humans within the city limits are killed instantly by the blast. Roughly 300,000 more — half of the humans who live within 10 miles of the city — face a similar fate. Extreme property damage occurs as far away as Niagara Falls. The flash is clearly visible across the Great Lakes, from Toronto and even Detroit, and audible even further.

At this point, the *Carter* has 49 missiles still aboard.

Revealed!

The United States goes on the alert immediately, mobilizing troops throughout the world, moving onto Canadian soil without so much as an oh-by-the-way, and scouring the ocean for the *Carter*. The Joint Chiefs of Staff assume that *Carter*'s commander has gone insane and taken his crew with him.

The Garou Nation takes to the warpath just as quickly. Hundreds of spirits are sent scouting for the source of the explosion — despite their infiltration of American military networks, not even the Glass Walkers know right away that the missile came from an American submarine.

Within hours, Alexander Bear Child, a Wendigo of the Warpath, reveals to a pack of Shadow Lords outside of Calgary what he believes that Walking Bird has done. Bear Child shows no remorse, and expresses his desire that the Glacier Wind follow up against other "Wyrmbringer" cities. Less than one hour after that revelation, Stormcrows reach Margrave Konietzko and High King Albrecht (in that order). A hastily convened war council at the Sept of the Crescent Moon declares the Wendigo tribe anathema and foe, lost to the Wyrm.

Open Warfare

On December 21, Midwinter's night, Garou make a coordinated attack against Wendigo across North America and the trans-polar world. This attack interrupts a powerful ritual, the Song of the Longest Night, which the Wendigo feel they must undertake every year on Midwinter. That ritual is intended to allow Great Wendigo to sleep for one night of the year. If he does not do so, they say, the rest of the winter will be terrible and frigid as Great Wendigo squeezes the life out of the north.

The same day, the United States Army and Navy converge on the location of the *Carter*, either ignoring Canadian sovereignty or using old treaties that allow them to ignore Canadian sovereignty — it doesn't really matter, and the truth never comes out, because at best, the world comes close to ending. As the Army and Navy approach, Great Wendigo gifts the Glacier Wind pack with his strength and rage. Walking Bird launches as many missiles as he can before Navy destroyers and subs pound the *Carter* into a 125-yard mass of dented and torn HY-80 steel. Six missiles launch at targets precious to the "Wyrmbringers" of the United States: Washington, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Boston. Given the cordon of vessels around the *Carter*, four of these missiles are destroyed. The targets of the surviving missiles are left in the Storyteller's hands.

Other Wendigo across the world defend themselves in battle against the Garou Nation and some entreat the King and Margrave to hear them out. But moods are too angry, and too much longstanding bad blood exists between the Wendigo and the rest of the Nation for good sense to win the day.

Great Wendigo

In this scenario, the Wendigo tribe's totem spirit has been on the verge of being lost to Wyrm for at least a few years. The never-ending rage in the hearts of the Wendigo, combined with the tribe's half-tolerance of cannibalistic practices over the centuries, kept Great Wendigo from ever truly resting or accepting the Wyrmcomers and their totems.

This undying fury left Great Wendigo vulnerable to the depredations of Eater-of-Souls. That great Triatic Wyrm beast was blocked from entering the Realm ever again through the sacrifice of the Croatan, but it swore vengeance on the Garou, and now begins to exact that vengeance through Great Wendigo. It whispers traitorous suggestions into Great Wendigo's ears just as the cannibal winter spirit is most vulnerable to such things — just as the Song of the Longest Night is interrupted and his children come under attack. Eater-of-Souls corrupts Great Wendigo, and he feeds his children his hatred and encourages them to let fly as the Devourers.

At the same time, Wendigo blankets the northern hemisphere in a truly epic winter. The skies darken; even as far south as Mexico and Libya, inches of snow turn to feet and more. At night temperatures drop to truly dangerous levels, and the elderly and weak die. It is a terrible Christmas.

...And The Black Spiral Dancers

The Dancers come out from under the hills and caves when the Apocalypse begins to roll, and they happily fight alongside the Devourers as the opportunity presents itself. Both sides feel some unease, and a few areas experience some infighting, but on the whole the Dancers and Devourers work together as an effective fighting force.

Apocalypse

News reports throughout the world tell of howling monsters eating human flesh and destroying small towns; Banes and other Wyrm servants fall in line with the Devourers and Dancers. The Garou Nation takes the battles that it can — the Devourers remain strongest in the northern hemisphere, and Albrecht takes the surprising step of asking the leaders of the Fera of South America and Africa to hold their territory while he directs forces under the Silent Strider Walks-With-Might and the Get of Fenris warleader Golgol Fangs-First to strike northward.

Tensions across the globe ratchet up as the United States comes under nuclear attack. Armies mobilize; terrorist groups take unusually daring actions; religious fundamentalists of all stripes begin to holler about the end of the world. In a few tense regions (the Korean peninsula; Chechnya; Israel; in the Congo and Sudan; anywhere else the Storyteller wants to pick on) wars break out. The servants of Gaia are too busy elsewhere to worry much about any of it.

The Final Battle comes in North America somewhere — perhaps in the Canadian Great Plains, or along the Hudson Bay, or on a glacier somewhere in Alaska or Nunavut. Far away from human eyes and entirely out of their element, the forces of Gaia see their final challenge.

The East

The Hengeyokai — the shifters of the Middle Kingdom, who also call themselves Xiong Ren ("Ferocious People") — live differently than the Garou and Fera of the Western Concordiat. They live in relative peace with one another, and their packs often consist of Fera of many different breeds.

In 2000, the Stargazer tribe abandoned the Western Concordiat to join the hengeyokai in defending Asia from the predations of the Wyrm. For more detail on these creatures, see **Players Guide to the Changing Breeds** and **Tribebook: Stargazers**.

Foreshadowing

The hengeyokai, like the vampires of the Far East, believe that the universe traverses a heavenly cycle. Every few thousand years, they say, the Age changes. The First Age was one of bliss and peace as all creatures lived together in harmony; the Sixth Age will be one of agony and pain as the Demon Emperor takes his

throne as ruler of the Earth; and the Twelfth Age will return us to the joy of the First Age once again. The consensus among the Ferocious People is that the world sits on the dark side of the Fifth Age, with the Sixth Age just around the corner. This mirrors the Western Concordiat's belief that the Apocalypse is about to begin.

However, while the Garou of the West disagree as to the aftermath of the Apocalypse, the Fera of the East are supremely confident that after the Sixth Age there will come a Seventh that isn't quite so bad, and then an Eighth that is an improvement on that, and so on.

Therefore, some lords of the Beast Courts reason, it makes sense to give the Great Wheel a good kick on the downward spin, to get the universe into and through the Sixth Age as quickly as possible. These hengeyokai become known as the "Fatalists." Others, the less-reputable members of the Beast Courts, would like to get into the good graces of the eventual Demon Emperor, but they are in the minority (they are the "Appeasers"). A third group (the "Delayers") wishes to hold the universe in the Fifth Age for as long as possible, reasoning that no good can come from accelerating such a terrible fate. Many Stargazers fall into this last camp.

The First Step

The "Fatalists" among the hengeyokai take matters into their own hands in late January of 2004 — the start of the Lunar New Year celebration. In order to hasten the coming of the Sixth Age, dozens of packs of the Ferocious People travel into Manchuria and Mongolia. The hengeyokai have known for a thousand years that dozens of deep and powerful Wyrm-tainted caerns lay dormant in that region, forming a small maze of Dragon Lines (moon bridges) among them. These Pits are all Level Four and Level Five Wyrm caerns, but most of them have been kept sealed through the actions of the hengeyokai since the dawn of the Fifth Age a thousand years ago. No longer.

Each pack contains a Theurge or Philodox with the Rite of Caern Opening. Though there are running battles between

the Fatalists and the Delayers, there is little that the Delayer minority can do to stop the vast number of Fatalists from uncorking the Manchurian Pits.

The Pits open and the Thousand Hells pour out.

Open Warfare

The Stargazers among the Delayers launch themselves along moon bridges to Europe, Australia, and the Americas in the hopes of finding allies to fight the forces of Malfeas in Asia. Already knowing that they are too late to stop the Apocalypse from coming, the best the Stargazers can hope for is to keep the depredations of the Wyrm and its minions from spreading too horribly across Asia and thence the rest of the world.

The idealistic Stargazers don't consider the mistrust that much of the Western Concordiat holds them in.

The Dawn of the Sixth Age

If the cosmology of the hengeyokai is correct, during the war some powerful entity will emerge and claim the crown of the Demon Emperor. This entity may be an extraordinary werewolf — a Rank 6 Garou that has fallen to the Wyrm might suffice — but is more likely an Incarna or Celestine or entity of similarly extreme power. In this scenario, the world continues, passing through a few centuries of the Sixth Age before improving oh-so-slightly into the Seventh.

The War Itself

If the fall of a tribe is simply a prelude to other sorts of war, then refer to the other chapters of this book for guidance. If, on the other hand, you wish to focus on the uniquely tribal nature of this war, consider a few analogies from the United States Civil War.

First, the fallen tribe's members know *everything* that is public knowledge within the Garou Nation. They know where the big caerns are. They know who the important leaders are, and *someone* in the fallen tribe probably knows each leader's weaknesses, strengths, preferred Gifts, rites, and fetishes to boot.

In this scenario, one of the weaknesses of modern-day Garou society that so many elders rail against is exposed as a true weakness: With so many multi-tribe packs out there, the fall of a single tribe to the Wyrm exposes the weaknesses and secrets of the majority of Garou. If modern Garou society were more insular — with most packs being single-tribe packs — then the fallen tribe would not have infiltrated the others quite so deeply, and its loss, while still hard, would not be crippling in the way it may be today.

By the same token, though, the elders and leaders of the fallen tribe grew up with the rest of the Garou Nation — everybody knows everybody. The modern leaders of the Western Concordiat have a good idea of the skills, strengths, and weaknesses of their erstwhile allies. They all know one another's fighting styles, and should probably spend some time thinking "I know he'd prefer to do this in a frontal assault, but he *knows* I know he'd prefer to do this in a frontal assault…"

Fallen and loyal Garou try to use their former pack bonds and mutual loyalties against the others. Fallen Garou expect their former packmates and allies to fight with regret, perhaps holding back on the killing blow in the hopes of redeeming a friend from a dark fate. Count on fallen Garou to take advantage of this by feigning surrender or showing false loyalty. Gaian werewolves can call on old loyalties, and dredge up memories that are unpleasant to fallen Garou — they might pull a few former allies into frenzy. Gifts, rites, and totem powers that rely on two Garou being packmates might well still work on fallen former packmates.

One Stands Alone

You may choose, at the end, to have the entire Garou Nation fall save for one tribe. Just about any tribe would work in this role, but it makes the most sense to have the nature of the other tribes' fall be something that the chosen tribe is more resistant to. If the Wyrm works through perverting the Ancestor Spirits of all the other tribes, then it makes sense that most Silent Striders or Glass Walkers would be resistant to such corruption. If the Wyrm drags Garou to fall by goading their Rage to intolerable levels, perhaps the Children of Gaia would resist.

Whichever tribe stands alone surely faces an impossible siege, a guerilla war that it is sure to lose. The tribe members may find individual allies here and there — some Kami, perhaps, a few nature spirits, or lone Garou or Fera that have resisted the Wyrm's call. This situation is even bleaker than most other scenarios portrayed herein.

Principles of a Garou Civil War

Military analysts identify 12 principles of human war. While these principles don't all apply perfectly to Garou war, it is useful to point out a few that apply particularly well to werewolf warfare. In certain principles, the fallen tribe has a great advantage, while in others the Garou Nation has the advantage. The principles of war are fairly self-evident from their names alone; we won't waste space defining each one here.

Mass: The Garou Nation outnumbers the fallen tribe, even when the numbers of Black Spiral Dancers

are added in. If this war were just held between the Garou of both sides, the forces of Gaia would certainly win. However, the Wyrm's forces include millions of Banes, putting the edge in this battle with the Wyrm.

Unity of Command: This one is a toss-up. There are eleven Gaian tribes, each with its own leadership and tribal totem, and Garou are fundamentally pack-driven creatures rather than nation-driven creatures. Albrecht and Konietzko do have a lot of authority granted through personal loyalty. The Wyrm is a single entity with a driving goal, but the Wyrm is crazy and evil and operates through three or thirteen or dozens of crazy and evil lieutenants.

Objective: The Wyrm's side has objectives that are quite clear and easy to maintain. The fallen tribe wants to murder Gaia. The Gaian Garou have more complex needs. Saving Gaia is tricky; do the Garou go to Malfeas to confront the Wyrm in its den? Do they try to redeem the fallen tribe? Do they set up lines of defense around valuable caerns or vulnerable spots?

Maneuver: Which faction is better at getting its warriors into the right place at the right time? There are a number of factors that influence this. Modernist Garou are comfortable with vehicles from cars to helicopters; strongly anti-Weaver Garou refuse to use such. So in part it's a question of which tribe falls — if an *urrah* tribe falls, then the Wyrm has an advantage in maneuver in the Realm. But there are other parts of reality that apply here — the Umbra, and moon bridges. The faction that controls the largest number of powerful caerns probably also has the greatest number of moon bridges under its control, and so can more easily shuffle Garou from place to place as the war progresses. But moon bridges can be dangerous, too, as attack moon bridges can be dropped in place, and many battles occur between hostile septs connected via moon bridge. The utility of the Umbra for moving troops depends largely on the local Gauntlet and the time of day. Remember, when the Helios is high in the sky, Wyrm creatures have the advantage in the Umbra. Gaian Garou need to time their movements carefully during war, as a result.

Security: How effective are spies? How securely kept are each side's plans? This depends on the circumstances of the fall. "Details of the Fall," p. 77, discusses the ways in which a tribe might fall. If the fallen tribe leaves behind no living Garou still loyal to Gaia its security is very good. If traitors to the Wyrm still roam, however, they may be able to suss out the Wyrm's battle plans. Gaian Garou have some problems in this area, as described above — the fallen tribe has some idea of the Garou Nation's overall battle plans, so there is a lack of security. In the balance this point swings to the Wyrm.

The Fighting Itself

Again, feel free to steal copiously from the scenarios in the other chapters of this book — **Apocalypse** is intended to be a toolkit for you to put together the chronicle-ending war that fits your game best.

In a "dedicated" tribal fall game, the meat of the story revolves around running battles between the fallen tribe and its erstwhile allies. The fallen tribe has the advantage, as described above — it has thousands if not millions of Banes on its side, as well as the Black Spiral Dancers. It also has intimate knowledge of the Garou Nation's wartime contingency plans, the names and tendencies of its leaders, and its most powerful caerns' locations and secrets.

One possible sequence of events is as follows:

The Wyrm's slaves have determined that once the Garou themselves are all destroyed or fallen, Gaia dies. Barring that, the capture and perversion of a certain number of powerful caerns provides the same result. The number and power of these caerns isn't known to the Wyrm's forces, but they know that they must capture and either destroy or corrupt as many Level 4 and 5 caerns as they can.

The fallen tribe and its Spiral allies start by following Sun Tzu's rule: Attack in strength where your enemy is weak. They pick off the smaller caerns across the globe, using Umbral travel, Thunderwyrms, and attack moon bridges to hit the Garou where they are weakest. Many Level 1 caerns have no more than a single pack guarding them, after all — and some caerns' primary defenders just happen to be members of the fallen tribe.

The sensible response to this action on the part of the Garou leadership is to pull back to more powerful caerns. This makes sense on several levels — fewer locations to defend leads to a higher concentration of defenders at each site; and more powerful caerns are more valuable to Gaia. It can safely be assumed that at this point the Garou Nation doesn't have a good idea of what the Wyrmish forces' overall goal is. They're just using common sense. If the troupe's pack is of high enough rank to participate in councils of war, they may choose to try and push things another way; this is a great opportunity for roleplay, as some of the most powerful Garou in the world argue on a course of action to save or doom them all.

The Wyrm's forces do expect the Garou to fall back and take a defensive stance. The Black Spiral Dancers and the Wyrm's spirit forces come out into the open at this point. They specifically target tribes known for their affection for humans — the Glass Walkers, Bone Gnawers, and Children of Gaia are

foremost, but other tribes might also be targets. They don't attack those tribes directly; they begin murdering, raping, pillaging, and rampaging through human communities precious to their targeted tribes. Human law enforcement and military is sure to get involved, but remember, this *is* the World of Darkness. The Wyrm has its teeth in law enforcement and the military, and the Dancers and Banes have little trouble with those forces that aren't effectively their allies.

The Wyrm's forces are counting on a Garou counterattack here. When a few septs commit heavily to a counterattack, the fallen tribe's observers should be able to tell which septs are involved. The fallen tribe opens an attack moon bridge from one of its more powerful Pits directly to a Gaian caern now known to be lightly defended. It falls; its defenders are slaughtered or forced to walk the Black Spiral. Moving with lightning speed, the fallen tribe leaves some of its number behind to pervert the caern with the Rite: Poison the Well (see Appendix) while others traverse moon bridges to attack "adjacent" caerns — those directly connected to the fallen caern by moon bridges. When the fallen tribe encounters heavy resistance, as it expects to, its packs fall back to any conquered caerns and desecrate them with the Rite: Cap the Well (see Appendix). If the fallen Garou can pervert conquered caerns into Wyrm Pits, all the better, but they don't wait around for long enough to let the Garou Nation mount a counterattack in force.

Assuming that the Garou Nation manages to withstand this first feint-and-assault, it suffers continual similar attacks until either the human-loving tribes stop themselves from charging to protect the apes or the other tribes (such as the Red Talons) literally attack the *urrah* tribes to prevent such foolishness. After that, the Wyrm's forces are free to assault humanity as they see fit, and they do see fit. This is coupled with occasional strikes on weak outlying caerns just to keep Gaia's defenders on their toes. Slowly, the Garou Nation's resources begin to fade, morale decreases, and the Garou come to believe that the Apocalypse can be lost.

A few weeks or possibly months pass, and this kind of thing continues. The Garou Nation shouldn't need longer than that to decide that the best way to put an end to these atrocities and the loss of caern after caern is to strike hard against one of the fallen tribe's most powerful Pits. This battle may be the first of several hard-fought battles for powerful territory, or, if the Garou have lost several powerful caerns already, it may be the true Final Battle. If the Garou assault isn't the Final Battle, then surely the fallen tribe's all-out attack on the most powerful remaining caern — possibly the pack's home caern, but if not, then use a little historical resonance from your chronicle. Pick a caern that the characters already have a stake in, one they have visited and have allies at.

At that Final Battle, all the stops come out. The Garou must truly fight across the world. Zmei and Thunderwyrms emerge from their caverns; Banes assault every noteworthy Garou holding in the hopes of keeping them away from the main battlefield, wherever that lies. The troupe's pack absolutely must be present at this battle. Perhaps they have to struggle to get there, but if they are not present at the Final Battle, your players will hate you forever.

As the Final Battle commences, pull out everything you've got. Former allies and enemies not seen for months or years throw themselves into the battle; un-fallen members of the fallen tribe hurl themselves against their tainted relatives (probably valiantly going to their doom); mountains shake; the sky turns black. One way or another, after this battle, the world as we know it is over.

End of the War

A tribal fall scenario may not stand alone. Any tribe's fall could lead into any of the other three major scenarios in this book. A tribal fall to the Weaver could lead to a *Weaver Ascendant* scenario; scenarios about tribal totems falling to the Wyrm might lead to a *Last Battleground* scenario; and just about *any* of them could lead to a *Ragnarok* scenario. And the tribal fall could be its own thing — the fall results in war among the Garou and the emergence of the Wyrm's forces.

If the story does spin off into other scenarios in this book, it is critically important to resolve the tribal fall scenario itself as the war comes to an end. It's a simple rule of drama. If the Apocalypse kicks off because of the fall of a tribe to the Wyrm, a satisfying resolution to the tribe has to be reached. It can be a tragic resolution — and it probably will be. Here are some choices:

• **Gaian Garou Triumphant:** Zhyzhak is destroyed; the Triatic Wyrms, Urge Wyrms, and Maeljin Incarna are banished or destroyed; the Wyrm is crippled forever, destroyed, or healed to become the Wyrm of Balance, as befits the mythic resonance of your chronicle. Most importantly, the Gaian Garou destroy the fallen tribe and their Black Spiral allies. But don't run this as a happy ending! The warriors of Gaia spend days in a desperate fight against their brothers and cousins; even if Gaia survives, She is greatly reduced by the destruction of an entire tribe and the deaths of hundreds of loyal Garou. The fallen tribe's totem is almost certainly destroyed in this scenario; if it isn't ripped to pieces by the other totem Incarna, it suicidally fades into the Umbra. This is a tragedy! No werewolf wants victory to

come joined with the loss of beloved packmates and allies.

• **Fallen Tribe Redeemed:** At the last minute, during the Final Battle, a few members of the fallen tribe have a change of heart. Perhaps love for a Kinfolk, or Garou parent, child, or packmate brings them around; perhaps the touch of an un-fallen totem Incarna or Gaia Herself burns away the Wyrm taint. These newly loyal Garou, along with the few (if any) remaining packs that never fell turn the tide, striking at their own forces from surprise and giving the Gaian Garou time to regroup. The redeemed Garou of the fallen tribe fall to the forces of the Wyrm, but they do enough — by showing loyalty to Gaia when all seems lost, they bring about Her victory. Gaia is greatly diminished, and the power of spirits and spirituality greatly decreases in the world for years. The Garou themselves fade within a generation — but then, they are no longer needed.

• **Mutual Destruction:** The Final Battle leaves the world in ruins. Gaia teeters on the brink, as the fallen Garou and loyal Garou slaughter one another almost to a man. A final struggle atop a hill, surrounded by corpses, between the Wyrm's premiere pack of Dancers and fallen Garou, and the troupe's pack, should be the capstone to this ending. The battlefield is silent, save for the crackling of fire, the cawing of carrion birds, and the grunts of effort and cries of pain as this final combat takes place. The forces are evenly matched; if even one Gaian Garou survives, Gaia Herself lives on. If the Wyrm's wolves slay all the Gaians, Gaia dies and the world ends. If both sides fall simultaneously… Gaia dies to be reborn down the road a bit.

• **Fallen Garou Triumphant:** The battle is a near one, and Gaia's defenders fight valiantly, but the swarms of Banes of all shapes, sizes, and power levels keep the Garou from getting too near the fallen tribe. In the end, the leader of the fallen tribe falls at the hands of the greatest heroes of the Garou Nation, but they strike too late — they are slain by other fallen Garou, and the fallen tribe goes on to carve out Gaia's heart and consume it. The Wyrm is victorious; the world ends.

Weaver Ascendant

"What is evil but good tortured by its own hunger and thirst?"
— Khalil Gibran

Life is pain. It is an endless sea of meaningless interactions, filled with feelings of abandonment and betrayal. It is over before most recognize its significance, and its short duration is plagued with disease, conflict, and misery. Yes, life is pain. But it need not be thus. There is another way — a way of unchanging beauty in thought and deed, of eternal acceptance and understanding. It is the Weaver's way, and this is the story of how she seeks to share it with the world. This is the story of Clarification.

The beauty of the Onesong is beyond description; it offers us an end to conflict and misery and suffering, and it holds the promise of an era of peace and tranquility. Sadly, there are some who fight against this hallowed vision. They lash out against the agents of order with tooth and claw, doing everything in their power to rend the vision to pieces. They must be purged if the system is to survive. This is the only way to make the beauty of Clarification a reality.

Introduction

Conventional Garou wisdom holds that the Wyrm will be the architect of the Apocalypse. As Garou Theurges scrutinize the Prophecy of the Phoenix, looking for answers within its cryptic passages, they watch as the Wyrm's maleficent soul spreads throughout the world, defiling everything it touches. It is only a matter of time, they say, before the Garou face their final battle in the war to save the soul of Gaia.

Weaver Ascendant is the story of what happens when the assumptions the Garou mystics believe are turned on their head. It asks us what would happen if the Wyrm were crushed beneath the fury of order's wrath, bowing before the Weaver in her quest for world domination. And it thrusts the Garou into the midst of a desperate struggle to save the soul of Gaia, and in the process free the Wyrm from the madness of the Weaver's Pattern Web once and for all.

The Plot

Weaver Ascendant concerns itself with the events that follow the true globalization of the Weaver's power within the human sphere. It begins with the rise of Shinzui Industries, a Japanese corporation with goals and aspirations that reach far beyond its station. It chronicles the gradual decay of the Wyrm's stranglehold over Western society, and the effects of its collapse on the Garou and all they hold dear. When the dust settles the Garou find that they themselves have become targets, and as they scramble to survive they see that the

Weaver has become a much more active player in world affairs than they ever could have anticipated. The Weaver's ascension thus becomes the trigger of the world's destruction, and the Garou know with cold certainty that the Apocalypse is upon them.

And yet, as is ever the case, chaos brings opportunity. The Weaver has made a crucial error in her bid for global conquest, and it is an error that the Garou can exploit. Doing so will cost them everything they hold dear, but if they are successful the soul of Gaia can be saved, and the Celestines of the Triat can be restored to their proper roles. The world will become the place it should have been all along, and its inhabitants will finally know peace.

Weaver Ascendant is not about powerful characters like Jonas Albrecht and Yuri Konietzko and Zhyzhak; rather, it is about the players' characters and how they choose to deal with events that occur on a scale nearly beyond imagining. They have to pick their friends and enemies, choose their battles, and decide for themselves how their world is going to end. When all is said and done the world will be changed forever (if, indeed, it even exists at all), but the road the characters take to that final conflict is entirely up to them.

Theme

At its heart *Weaver Ascendant* is a story of death and rebirth, and of righting a cycle that was corrupted long ago. It snaps into focus one of the most basic themes of the **Werewolf** cosmology, asking the characters just how much they're willing to sacrifice to change the world for the better. Also important is the element of trust, both on a personal scale and on a very fundamental level.

Mood

Weaver Ascendant plays heavily on feelings of doubt and uncertainty, and these should set the mood for the scenario. Early scenes of the story should radiate confusion at every turn, and as things progress these feelings should give way to paranoia and despair. It is only at the end of the scenario that the characters are allowed to feel hope, and even then it is tainted by the uncertainty of loss and sacrifice.

Signs and Portents

No story begins without provocation. There are circumstances and events that give clues as to the nature of things to come, and perceptive individuals can analyze these clues and learn something about the events that unfold in the days and weeks ahead. Some of these signs are discussed below, as are their relationships to the players' pack.

Anthelios

To understand the story of the End Times, one must first understand the true nature of the Red Star, known to the Garou as Anthelios. The Garou are frightened by the star's existence. They are unsure of its significance, and they fear the things they do not understand. Most feel a sense of great foreboding when contemplating it, and they call it the Eye of the Wyrm. Some believe it is a harbinger of the Apocalypse, and they are not far wrong. But the truth of the matter is far different than anything they might have imagined.

Anthelios is indeed a symbol of the Wyrm's power, and it is also a sign of the coming Apocalypse. It is not, however, a sign of corruption. It is not a brand of ill omen, burning through the night sky. Rather, it is a symbol of hope. It is an avatar of the Balance Wyrm, the great progenitor of the forces of corruption the Garou have fought for millennia, who even now slumbers deep within the knot of reality that is Malfeas. It is his fiery rage made manifest, the bridge between his prison within the Pattern Web and the realm of spirit. It is his connection with our reality.

Anthelios burns bright because the Machine, the ultimate reflection of the Weaver's power that has existed since the dawn of human civilization, has awoken. The order of reality has shifted, and this has given the Wyrm of Balance an unexpected opportunity. The Machine is not a simple automaton. It is not some clockwork mechanism devoid of feeling and purpose. Rather, it is the ultimate personification of aggression given form, the perfect application of force to achieve order and unity. And in that sense, the Machine's mere existence gives power to the Wyrm. Its transition to self-awareness has thus inadvertently given the Wyrm a means to escape the strands of the Pattern Web, and the red star Anthelios is a symbol of that opportunity.

The Perfect Metis

Of course, Anthelios is not the only symbol of the Wyrm's power (nor, indeed, of his desperation). There is another manifestation of the Wyrm's might at work in the world, one that strikes much closer to home for the Garou Nation. Like Anthelios, the significance of the Perfect Metis was largely lost on the Garou. Some thought him a harbinger of doom, while others thought him destined to be Gaia's champion. Ironically, both schools of thought are closer to the truth than they might imagine.

The uproar caused by the birth of a perfect metis cub to two metis parents brought the Garou Nation to the brink of civil war. It also resulted in some very odd meetings, as a number of agents of the Wyrm wanted nothing more than to ensure that the cub was blessed with their own special brand of Wyrm corruption. It was resolved, of course, but shortly thereafter agents of the

Wyrm, the *real* Wyrm, kidnapped the child and spirited him away, safeguarding him for use as the Wyrm's voice in the physical realm. Soon, very soon now, the child will return, and his coming will herald a new age.

The Rise of the Machine

With the rise of the computer age, which has made global connectivity possible, the strength and power of the Weaver have grown like never before. Her influence has spread to every corner of the globe, and it has made possible the rise of an enemy the likes of which the Garou, and indeed all the supernaturals of the world, have never encountered before: the Machine.

When or how the Machine gained sentience remains a mystery. Perhaps it is somehow tied to the nuclear detonations in Bangladesh a few years ago. Perhaps it is due to the existence of a certain critical mass of technological artifacts in the physical realm. Or perhaps it is simply time. No matter the reason, the Machine gained awareness, and in the process it quickly subverted the Weaver (or the Weaver subverted it; it's hard to draw a distinction in the modern day and age). Where once the Weaver's influence was subtle and adaptable, now it became harsh and unyielding. The Wyrm had been allowed to corrupt the Pattern Web for far too long, and the Machine was intent on expunging his taint once and for all.

Hostile Takeovers

The one thing standing between the Weaver/Machine and its goals was the ephemeral nature of the Wyrm's influence. The supernal himself was trapped within the knot of Malfeas, deep within the Pattern Web, but the Urge Wyrms that were born from his struggle to escape the Web's strands had no physical form (indeed, they lacked even a spiritual form). How could the Machine fight the Wyrm if his taint infests all of Creation?

As it turns out, the nascent megacorporation Shinzui provided the answers the Machine was seeking. Already thralls to the will of the Weaver, Shinzui's board of directors was expanding the corporation's influence throughout the Far East and the Pacific Rim. Several of these branch offices found that their sphere of influence happened to overlap with that of another multinational megacorporation, this one with its roots in America instead of Asia: Pentex. First in Tokyo, then in Bangkok, Los Angeles, and a number of other cities, Shinzui corporate officers found their paths crossing with those of Pentex employees. The awakened elite of Shinzui began to notice a pattern of corruption within the Pentex hierarchy, and from there it was only a matter of time before the Machine came to a startling realization: control the corporation, and you control the Wyrm.

In retrospect, it was really pretty obvious. The Urge Wyrms exist to spread corruption and power however they can, and what better way to make their needs manifest on a large scale than through the aegis of a powerful, supposedly legitimate corporation? The Wyrm was doing the same thing through Pentex that the Weaver was doing through Shinzui. The difference lay in the fact that the Wyrm had been doing this sort of thing for far longer than the Weaver had, and hence had tremendous influence throughout the physical Realm.

That was about to change.

The Nature of the Machine

The Machine is an unusual spirit. At first glance, it appears to be an Incarna like any other (albeit one approaching Celestine status with frightening speed). Closer inspection, however, reveals that it is something... else. Something different. The truth of the matter is that the Machine is a reflection of the Weaver, one that did not exist in any meaningful sense before the Industrial Revolution. As humanity developed its gears and levers and motors and engines, the Weaver's thirst for perfection and control intensified. The Machine is the essence of that hunger made manifest. It is, if you'll pardon the term, the Weaver's id. It is everything about the Weaver that is insane and out of control, and it has been influencing her activities on an unconscious level for centuries. But now it has awakened, and the Weaver's madness is complete. Gaia help us all.

Shinzui and You

Shinzui's conquest of Pentex is more than just background. It's also a way to directly link characters to the imminent Apocalypse. If any of your players' characters have made it their life's goal to monkeywrench Pentex, they might come in contact with Shinzui in any number of ways. Corporate accounts at all levels display some unusual activity, and it mystifies the suits at Pentex as much as anyone. Computer sabotage might wind up being redundant, as the characters discover someone else got to their targets before they did. But who? And, more importantly, why? And when the characters hit a particular site, they might find that something else has followed them back home... something decidedly unfriendly. It doesn't matter if their efforts are physical, digital, or spiritual, they *will* cross paths with Shinzui eventually. The only question that remains is this: How many other Garou (or septs of Garou) are compromised in the process?

Opening Strikes

Shinzui's takeover of Pentex began with its Tokyo offices. The strategy was simple: the Machine simply manipulated the records of Pentex's earnings in such a way that the Tokyo office appeared to be the victim of gross mismanagement. When coupled with a fiendishly clever ad campaign designed to undermine the company's subsidiaries in the private sector, the end result was a weakened branch office that was ripe for takeover. Shinzui went for the jugular, and managed to buy out all of Pentex's Japanese holdings in a matter of weeks.

Subsidiaries, Subsidiaries, Subsidiaries

Even an entity as powerful as the Machine can't simply take over a megacorporation overnight. While Shinzui had gained a foothold in the Pentex hierarchy by taking over its Tokyo offices, the fact remained that the company was still perfectly solvent. It had offices all over the world, and the fall of any one of them was a mere footnote in the company's history. But Shinzui was thinking long-term: it didn't want Pentex *per se*, at least not immediately. It just wanted dirt on the company's subsidiaries, and thanks to some quick action during the Tokyo takeover that's exactly what the company got.

Shinzui analysts found that several Pentex subsidiaries had interests that dovetailed with their own, and this is where the company focused the brunt of its assault. Consolidex Worldwide and Endron International proved to be critical for revenue, so they were hit first. But the real prizes from Shinzui's perspective were the weapons manufacturers Herculean Firearms Incorporated and Nastrum Enterprises, along with Magadon, Incorporated and Tellus Enterprises. These subsidiaries represented the bleeding edge of technological innovation, and once they were cleansed of their corrupt infrastructure they would prove to be the very backbone of the Machine's conquest of the physical realm.

Special Projects

Of particular interest to Shinzui's directors is Pentex's Special Projects Division. The actual end products of those efforts are, of course, utterly repugnant to any who are fully in tune with the Onesong. But the fact remains that Kiro Yamazaki and the Black Spiral Dancer Francesco have made some impressive strides in understanding the nature of the union of flesh and spirit. Moreover, while Shinzui has no real interest in duplicating the Special Projects efforts, it is certainly not above using the fruits of those efforts for its own ends. Storytellers who wish to make life even more miserable for their PCs should thus feel free to add Project: Odyssey fomori to the already impressive arsenal at Shinzui's disposal.

The takeover was subtle, but surprisingly rapid. More importantly, it was thorough. The Machine isn't just a spirit, after all — it is the essence of the very fabric of modern society, and there is nothing it cannot find. It tore through all the shams that kept Pentex afloat, discovered all of the secrets of its board of directors, and pilfered all of their personal accounts. Every transaction that was made via computer or telephone was monitored, and this in turn gave the Machine total control. The workload was staggering, but it was child's play for a motivated near-Celestine. Pentex never had a chance.

War with the Garou

While the bulk of Shinzui's middle management concerned themselves with acquiring Pentex and its subsidiaries, the upper echelons of the megacorp turned their attention to an altogether different target: the supernatural, and specifically the Garou. Since most of the company's directors are either Garou or Kinfolk, they are keenly aware of the power their kind can amass when given the right incentive. Neutralizing the threat they posed was thus a crucial step on the Machine's path toward total control.

The Weaver's Forces

Spirits

In the months preceding the events described in *Weaver Ascendant*, Weaver-spirits have undergone a slow but inexorable shift in behavior. They are more active than they've been in the past, and they are becoming more and more aggressive toward non-Weaver entities. In game terms, increase difficulties for all rolls involving interaction with Weaver spirits by two. This applies to social rolls as well as activation rolls for Gifts and fetishes.

Shinzui's Drones

Shinzui Industries, an advanced technology corporation headquartered in Japan supplies the Weaver's primary assault force in the physical realm. The breadth of Shinzui's empire has been growing by leaps and bounds over the past several years, and unbeknownst to most of its employees nearly everyone in management positions has been converted to the Weaver's cause. The company is thus in an ideal position to create all of the supernatural paramilitary units it can muster, deploying them around the world to deal with the "supernatural problem." They are extremely well organized and equipped to deal with anything that comes their way, making them frighteningly capable enemies.

The Weaver's Drone assault teams are comprised of elite Drones that have significant experience interacting with supernatural entities of various sorts (typi-

cally without the latter's knowledge). The standard format for a team (if "standard" can be applied to a unit as rarely employed as a Drone assault team) is six Drones: four soldiers, one reassurance (damage control powers, both *MiB*-style memory alteration and physical repair), and one bricklayer (temporary Gauntlet-raising powers). The teams operate in fairly straightforward fashion: the soldiers secure an area using highly-coordinated teamwork, the bricklayer ensures that the targets do not escape, and the reassurance covers the team's tracks once the wetwork is complete. All members of the team act in perfect synchronicity, and their level of coordination is such that it puts that of most Garou packs to shame.

The abilities the team members possess are fairly straightforward, and they don't vary much (as one would expect of agents of the Weaver). They are, however, tailored to deal with the supernatural creatures in question; the sample team in the Appendix, for example, is tailored to destroy Changing Breed targets.

Shinzui also employs a number of Drones for highly specialized purposes, the most notable of whom is Emperor Raiden. A former Boli Zouhisze Glass Walker who succumbed to the temptations of the Onesong, Raiden is a horrifying spectacle in the eyes of most Garou. His transformation into a Drone is bad enough, but the fact that he willingly underwent cybernetic and bionic augmentation is nigh unthinkable. He is the Glass Walkers' worst nightmare, and Shinzui uses him as an assassin specializing in supernatural targets.

Although Drones can be treated largely like fomori with Weaver-oriented powers, more information can be found in **Book of the Weaver** or **Possessed: A Players Guide**.

DNA's Investigators

In contrast to the Weaver's other agents, the scientists at DNA are largely ignorant of the role they play in the Weaver's plans. Few serve her directly, thinking instead that they are working for the best interests of mankind by working to eliminate the shapeshifter scourge. By the time they realize just how far they've fallen, it will be far too late to do anything about it.

The Purge

Shinzui's efforts to contain the Garou threat are as straightforward as they are brutal: any Garou that can be shown the beauty of the Onesong, and who undergo the process of Clarification, are spared. All others will be annihilated. Shinzui's strikes against the Garou are carried out by small teams of well-equipped Drones, all slaves to the will of the Machine. These beings operate with frightening efficiency, striking without warning and wasting no time on idle chatter or senseless egotism. Their goal is to wipe their quarry off of the face of the Earth, and they extremely good at what they do.

Shattered Glass

Perhaps not surprisingly, Shinzui's first strike against the Garou utterly annihilates the Mother of Peach Trees Caern, the last bastion of the Boli Zouhisze

in Asia. Most of their intel on the sept comes from the fallen Garou now known as Emperor Raiden, one of Shinzui's pet assassins. A former Boli Zouhisze himself, Raiden knows all the ins and outs of his former sept, and he uses that information to betray them in truly spectacular fashion. But the slaughter does not stop there; indeed, it has only begun. In like fashion Shinzui begins to eliminate the septs of the Beast Courts of the Emerald Mother, using the information gleaned from its Hakken directors to dissect the Hengeyokai piece by piece. The attacks are so swift and so savage that the various sentai have no chance to react, and it is only a matter of time before they are forced to yield.

With the shapeshifters of the East pacified, Shinzui now turns its sights on the lands to the West. It approaches the problem from a number of angles. Branches of both Endron International and Consolidex Worldwide, now firmly under Shinzui's control, have both reported terrorist activity in Northern Europe with an environmental motivation. Data provided by the few survivors of the Boli Zouhisze Garou (mostly through the use of Project: Odyssey fomori) also points to this region, which in turn leads Shinzui to the doorstep of the Glass Walkers.

The slaughter begins in Frankfurt and London, and proceeds south to the Walkers' ancestral homes in Italy and north to their new strongholds in the Netherlands. The Walkers are taken completely by surprise; they have never before dealt with a foe that is at once so regimented and so brutal. Shinzui's operatives use the tools of the Machine as well as the Walkers ever did, and they are primed to kill in a way heretofore seen only in Wyrmspawn. It is the city walkers' greatest nightmare made manifest, and their annihilation in Europe is nigh total.

The Weaver's Thralls?

Given their close affiliation with the Weaver, some Storytellers might be tempted to have the Glass Walkers fall victim to her dream of an ordered universe, effectively turning them against the Garou Nation. This would be a great coup for the Weaver, since her forces would receive huge amounts of data on the activities of all of the Garou tribes (this might, in fact, be the primary explanation for why things went down as they did), and it can work well within the context of this story. If you choose to go this route, shift the tribal allegiances of the Glass Walker protagonists presented elsewhere in this story, and replace the Weaver's main lieutenants with Glass Walkers and their Kin.

A House of Cards

As one might expect, the fall of the Glass Walkers is only the beginning. Between the fomori of Project: Odyssey and the resources of the Machine, it is a simple matter to track the movements of the other Garou tribes in Europe. The first of these, quite naturally, is the Silver Fangs. It is a tribe divided, and it cannot hope to stand against the Weaver's might. House after house falls to the technology of the Weaver, and why not? The Fangs are so intent on their politics and their obsession with the Wyrm that it never occurs to them to protect themselves from the subtler, more immediate threat posed by the Weaver. Their complacency leads to their destruction; only the House of the Blood Red Crest, in India, and House Wyrmfoe, in the Americas, remain.

The Fianna, known to all as bards and storytellers of the highest caliber, are cut down, ill-prepared for the devastating combination of fury and organization evident in their foes. The Ard Righ is assassinated, the tribes' caerns overrun, its septs scattered to the four winds. The Fianna yet remain alive, but their potency is forever shattered. It is they, however, who get the word out to the rest of the world: the Weaver is on the move, and her touch means death.

In marked contrast to the fortunes of their neighbors, the Get of Fenris are not taken in by the Weaver's surprisingly aggressive stance. While this was not what they had in mind for the End Times, they are the fiercest fighters the world has ever known. The Weaver's might is nothing to them, no matter the wrath of the Machine. Despite suffering heavy initial losses, the Fenrir manage to hold their primary caerns; the survivors go to ground, waiting for their chance to crush their foes beneath their feet. There can be no doubt that they will have their chance.

The Black Furies, Guardians of the Wyld, have always been caretakers of Gaia's most powerful secrets. Unfortunately, that very power draws the forces of the Weaver to them like a moth to a flame. In a surprise attack of staggering intensity, Shinzui's Drones wipe out the Furies' oldest and most powerful caerns, along with most of the Inner Calyx. It is not clear how many survive (if, indeed, any do), but their presence in Europe as a fighting force is completely eliminated.

The Shadow Lords, the last of the European tribes, are also the ones who weather Shinzui's assaults with the fewest losses. Ironically, their deliverance comes at the hands of their oldest foes. Shinzui's Drones find the Lords' physical defenses to be nigh impenetrable, largely because the Balkan werewolves have been accustomed to fighting battles of attrition for centuries. Assaulting the werewolves via the Umbra might have proven to be a useful tactic, but as it happens the Drones' atten-

tion is diverted by the Shadow Lords' traditional foes: the vampires of Eastern Europe. So disgusting are the practices of these beasts that the Drones find it necessary to eradicate them immediately, even if the Garou escape their grasp. And so the Lords witness their foes' destruction, and at the same time their own liberation.

Hidden Tribes

While the Garou are cut to pieces in Europe, things are different in America. The touch of Pentex is strong here, even if the capital behind it is long since gone. Additionally, the many large cities of America make tracking the Garou there more difficult. The remnants of the tribes cut down in Europe wait in hiding, while the tribes who have made America their homeland do their best to help their fellows avoid Shinzui's grasp. Chief among these is the Bone Gnawers, who are even now still regarded by most Garou with contempt. Their disdain has served the Gnawers well, however, since it means that most have little knowledge of the tribe's sacred grounds or organization. While their major caerns have fallen (including the Sept of the Green in New York), the Gnawers' tendency to scatter like rats when things get hot has ensured that their tribe remains largely intact. This has led to a somewhat startling turn of events: the Gnawers have taken to sheltering other Garou, helping them to plan their counterattacks against Shinzui and the Weaver. The worm has turned, as they say, and most Gnawers would be lying if they said they didn't enjoy being the big dog in town for a change.

Like the Bone Gnawers, the Children of Gaia largely escape the full brunt of the Weaver's wrath thanks to their affinity for urban settings. Taking shelter with their human Kin, the Children establish an impressive support network for the survivors of the Garou Nation in Europe, and they are preparing to do the same in North America should the need arise. Yuri Konietzko of the Shadow Lords appreciates their help, and the other tribes grudgingly give them a bit more respect in recent weeks.

Shinzui's Drones find destroying the Red Talons to be more difficult than one might expect, largely because the things tend to be scattered across countryside that makes most Weavertech next to useless. Their main caerns are lost, of course, but the Talons themselves are still a fairly potent presence among the Garou. They will have their day against the Weaver, and their fury might well be enough to drag her down.

The Silent Striders were scattered to the four winds long ago, and as a result they are difficult to destroy now. Shinzui hunts them with great fervor (since the Weaver despises their interference in Umbral affairs), but it's catch as catch can, meaning she's not having much luck. The Striders, for their part, are doing all they can to facilitate communications between fallen Garou septs, coordinating their efforts to strike back against Shinzui's offices and giving them Umbral support to the best of their ability. Meanwhile, they make preparations to take the battle against the Weaver to the Umbra, knowing full well that it will be they who lead the charge into the depths of Malfeas in hopes of freeing the Wyrm from the Weaver's webs.

Native Sons

The Uktena have one of the most extensive caern networks of all the Garou, and this makes them inviting targets for the Shinzui's attacks. However, many of these caerns are devoted entirely to keeping powerful Wyrm spirits in check, meaning the Weaver has to proceed cautiously with the extermination of this particular group of werewolves. The Uktena use this reticence to aid their fellow Garou, offering their caerns for use as some of the last gateways into the Umbra. They also reaffirm their ties with the Silent Striders, using their magics to buttress the Umbral assaults of their spiritual brethren.

Meanwhile, the Wendigo have been denigrated and dismissed throughout the Garou Nation for years, and Shinzui's policies on the tribe reflect this tired theme. The Wendigo are of no consequence, she thinks, and they are beneath her notice. But now is the Wendigo's time; no matter the Garou's opinion of them, nor even that of the Weaver, their battle skills are considerable, and their rage has been building for centuries. Like the Red Talons, they prove to be a decisive player in the final battle against the Weaver and her minions, and Gaia help any who stand in their way.

The Fera

Unlike the Garou, the western Fera are largely beneath the radar of the lords of Shinzui, which means they have escaped the Weaver's purges largely intact. Some, however, deserve special mention, either because of their ties to the Garou or because of their own machinations, which might prove decisive in the war to come.

The Weaver's activities have wrought some startling changes within the hierarchy of the Ananasi. Chief among these is the defection of the Tenere to the service of the Weaver, an event of staggering import even to those who know little of the werespiders' ways. The very idea of a werespider (to say nothing of an entire werespider faction) renouncing its allegiance to Queen Ananasa is ludicrous, but more puzzling still is the fact that the rest of *the Ananasi seem unconcerned by this turn of events.*

The truth of the matter is that the Tenere are playing a very dangerous game. In serving the Weaver, they hope to undermine her efforts to calcify the Umbra and buy their brethren time to enact a plan of astounding audacity. If they are successful, the Wyrm will be cut free of the

Pattern Web and the balance of the Triat will be restored. The plan is foolhardy in the extreme, but the Ananasi have no choice; if they are to free their queen, they must stop the Weaver. They have no other options.

In most games, this may seem to have no impact on the players' characters and their struggles. However, while the Tenere supplicate the Weaver, the other Ananasi factions are busy with projects of their own. The characters might actually encounter Kumoti werespiders during the course of their battle against Shinzui's Drones, and the Wyld-spiders will almost certainly do all they can to help the Garou (and perhaps even other Fera). Doing so actually reinforces the Tenere activities, as it reinforces that faction's ties with the Weaver and thus helps them to undermine her activities from within.

Meanwhile, the Hatar are pursuing goals of an altogether different sort. They have long sought to free their queen, Ananasa, from the Wyrm's grasp, and their plans for doing so have, to a greater or lesser extent, focused on the Atahsaia, the Ananasi metis breed. These are pure killing machines, with but one weakness: they need food to function. The Hatar are busy collecting this food, since they aim to release the Atahsaia from their amber prisons in the Deep Umbra in the very near future. The nature of that food? Human beings. The Hatar are making a modest effort to avoid taking supernatural creatures in this fashion, but they aren't picky. If a shapeshifter gets in their way, they'll paralyze the thing as readily as any human.

Despite their low numbers, the Gurahl may well play a crucial role in the battle to free the Wyrm from the Weaver's grasp. Their rites of purification are the most potent Gaia has ever created, and the Weaver fears their power. If the Garou can find them before the Weaver does, they might have a chance to end her crusade once and for all. If not... well, let's just say their chances aren't as good.

Since the Mokolé guard the most ancient and powerful of Gaia's lands, it is quite possible that they will prove essential allies in the Garou's struggles against the Weaver. Their memories are long, however, and few view the Garou as allies, even now. The Glass Walker Peter Ward has made enormous efforts to heal the wounds of the past, and Dragon seems to have accepted him as one of his own. But is it enough? Will the Mokolé lead the Garou to Gaia's sacred spaces when the time is right? That is for the Garou to decide.

The Weaver would likely be delighted to wipe the Nuwisha from existence, if only she could find the blasted things. She has long since given up on tracking them down, figuring that if the Clarification becomes a reality their antics will cease to be relevant. The Nuwisha, on the other hand, watch the Weaver's activities with growing concern, and the elders among them decide that it's time for them to rejoin the society of the Changing Breeds, regardless of whether or not the Garou have grown up. They are the quintessential Umbral guides, and when the time comes for the Garou to find the Wyrm none can help them so much as the Nuwisha. The only trick is figuring out how to convince the Garou to go along with the idea.

The only Changing Breed in the world with numbers approaching those of the Garou, the Ratkin have the added advantage of being a secretive lot, making them extremely difficult to destroy. They have little sympathy for the Garou, but they aren't fools: they know that the dogs are likely the only ones on the planet who have a hope in hell of taking out the Weaver, and they also know that they're pretty much fragged without help. The Ratkin offer that help in the following ways:

First, they give shelter to any Garou that seek it. This generally only applies to city Garou, but the Ratkin

Using the Fera in an Apocalypse Game

Where possible, ideas for incorporating the Fera into the scenario are included as sidebars to the main text. The Storyteller is encouraged to pick and choose among these, incorporating those that strike a chord with your story and leaving the rest to take place off camera. You obviously cannot (and should not) incorporate all of the Fera in this fashion, but adding a few for spice shows how the rest of Gaia's children are reacting to the Apocalypse without derailing the main thrust of the scenario. The Fera subplots can also ease the telling of the story considerably. The story likely won't lose much if you make no mention whatsoever of the Rokea during the Final Days (although they can still play a key role in the scenario), but navigating the Umbra in its altered state without the aid of the Nuwisha might prove to be exceptionally difficult.

No matter how you choose to incorporate the Fera into your game, always remember that the game is, first and foremost, about the Garou. They are the stars of the show, and the final battles, as well as all of the major decisions associated with them, are theirs to handle. The Fera unquestionably deserve to have a role of some significance during the Final Days, but they are supporting characters — their task is to aid the Garou, not steal their thunder. If you feel that the Fera are taking up too much time in the limelight, change things around a bit so that the bulk of the attention falls where it belongs — on the Garou, and specifically on the player characters. On the other hand, if you're running an all-Fera chronicle, then let them take the center stage over the Garou. Let your group's tastes be your guide.

aren't picky; if they get a chance to rub the Garou's losses in the face of a Silver Fang, they'll gladly take it.

Second, the Ratkin Engineers make contact with the remnants of the Glass Walkers and work closely with them to make plans for a counterattack. It's slow going, but the Ratkin's penchant for inciting riots should make it one helluva party once all the pieces are in place.

The Engineers are also working on ways to subvert the Weaver's webs in the Umbra. They're really not the ones to do this — they might well abandon the project if the Nuwisha or Ananasi show up — but they're more reliable than the Munchmausen, and the Garou can use all the help they can get.

The Beast Courts

The Weaver finds the cultural mindset of Communist China to be surprisingly compatible with her drive towards universal Clarification. Dozens of willing agents have spring up out of the woodwork, and the result for the hengeyokai is a bloodbath. Between the Communist government on one side and the might of organized crime families on the other, few hengeyokai sentai escape the Weaver's purges unscathed. The same holds true for most of the Sunset People in East Asia; the Glass Walkers' Mother of Peach Trees caern is annihilated, and even the ubiquitous Ratkin are reduced to a mere handful. It's a bad, bad time to be a child of the Emerald Mother, and things don't look to be getting better any time soon.

Given how bad the situation is in China and the bulk of East Asia, the strength of Gaia's children in India is somewhat surprising. This comes mostly as a result of a nigh-unprecedented alliance between the Silver Fangs of House Blood Red Crest and the Bagheera tribe of the Bastet. Between the Silver Fangs' authority and the Bagheera's knowledge of India's cities and technology, the Changing Breeds in India manage to stay one step ahead of the Weaver's forces. Currently, the Bagheera are coordinating their efforts to strike back with those of the Glass Walkers in the United States and Europe. The results should be fairly spectacular.

Spirit Matters

As the Weaver's assault teams methodically go about their business of exterminating the Garou, the werewolves find themselves faced with another problem: stepping into the Umbra isn't as easy as it used to be. The Weaver's agents are doing everything in their power to strengthen the Gauntlet, and the Tenere werespiders do more than their fair share to help. As a result, the Weaver's influence both in the Umbra and in the physical world is growing rapidly, to the point where even humans are noticing a difference in the way they think and feel and function. In addition, Garou also notice that Weaver spirits are much more active than they've been in the past, and much more aggressive besides. This makes life particularly difficult for those werewolves that depend largely on Weaver spirits to power their Gifts and fetishes.

In game terms, the Gauntlet rating *everywhere* increases by one. It continues to do this at the rate of one point per week. Within six weeks the boundary between the worlds of spirit and flesh becomes impassable, and every supernatural being on the planet loses the abilities that differentiate them from normal humans. In some cases, this means they revert to ordinary humans; in others, the creatures simply die, deprived of the spirit that sustains their existence. Still others just fade away, their very natures incompatible with the new world order.

The loss of the spirit world has devastating consequences for the Garou, but the implications go far beyond that. Every living thing on the planet has a connection of some sort to the spirit world, and without that connection they lose their will to live. The loss of spirit leads to the loss of creativity and individuality, and eventually the world and everything on it not directly connected to the Weaver becomes nothing more than a lifeless shell.

Project Reaper

For years, the scientists at Developmental Neogenetics Amalgamated (DNA) have been searching for a "cure" to what they call GLS, or genetic lycanthrope syndrome. Their research interests have included the mapping of the lycanthropic genome, investigations into the use of bionics and cybernetics to control the syndrome, and understanding the bizarre phenomena associated with victims of GLS.

While the researchers at DNA initially reported some success in controlling the spread of the syndrome, subsequent investigations indicated that those initial reports were overly optimistic. The lycanthropic genome itself defied logic, and attempts to map it failed utterly. Further, attempts to control the syndrome using cyberbiotechnology either killed the host or simply enhanced its abilities (often driving it mad in the process). At the end of the day, all DNA had to show for its efforts was a number of mangled test subjects and an exodus of researchers who left the company for greener pastures.

DNA's board of directors might have waffled on the subject of what to do about the GLS carriers if not for a shocking discovery: the lycanthropes were not alone in the world. Reports from affiliated companies in Tokyo, Manaus, Nairobi, Hong Kong, Mexico City, and a dozen other cities revealed the existence not only of lycanthropes around the world, but also of other shapeshifters as well. The scope of the threat DNA was

facing thus expanded dramatically; not only did it have to deal with werewolves, but also werecats, wererats, werecrocodiles, and even werehyenas. This is something the board of directors simply wasn't prepared to deal with, and they responded in predictable fashion. Rather than accept that the problem was beyond them and would have to be approached from a different perspective, they instead decided to eliminate it once and for all. So began the story of Project: Reaper.

Project: Reaper is an engineered virus designed to wipe out carriers of GLS. It is extremely effective in this regard, being an airborne virus with a rapid onset time and high mortality rate. Unfortunately (or fortunately, from the Garou's perspective), the virus burns itself out fairly rapidly; this makes it devastating to large concentrations of Garou or their Kin, but relatively innocuous otherwise. This comes as cold comfort to the ailment's victims, however, particularly since the virus comes at a time when the Garou Nation is fighting a war for its very survival.

Making Nice with the Ratkin

The Ratkin are, quite naturally, completely immune to the effects of Project: Reaper. In point of fact, they likely find the whole affair quite entertaining, as it means the Garou finally get their comeuppance. It is a mistake, however, to assume that every rat and his mother is happy with this state of affairs; the Weaver is, after all, going on the rampage, and the only thing the Ratkin hate more than the Garou is the Weaver. As such, it might (emphasis on the word *might*) be possible to convince a Plague Lord or two to help the Garou out, presuming they ask nicely. Doing so requires some careful roleplaying, but that might be a welcome break after being hunted by Weaver Drones and learning that the world's about to end.

The Great Concolation

As the Weaver's forces crack down on the supernatural elements in the world, the need for a concolation among the Garou becomes paramount. Unfortunately, organizing such a meeting is a feat in itself. The calcification of the Umbra is making travel via moon bridge exceedingly risky; in fact, only the most powerful caerns can safely be used in such a fashion, and Shinzui's Drones have conquered many of those. Some yet survive, however; the Wheel of Ptah sept in Casablanca is still active, and the Children of Gaia have managed to hang onto the Sept of the Western Eye's caern in San Francisco. Other active caerns include the Sept of the Waking Dream in Australia,

the Hollow Heart caern in the Amazon, the Sept of the Night Sky in Romania, and the Sept of the Snow Leopard in Tibet. Other caerns remain active, but none can safely act as either end of a moon bridge.

The location of the Great Concolation is left up to the Storyteller, but it should be remote. Reaching the place should be an adventure in and of itself, as the Garou have to outpace Shinzui Drones and other agents of the Weaver gunning for their hides. The Australian Outback is a good choice, since it has the strongest connections to the Umbra and is generally pretty isolated. The Amazon is also a good choice, since it's a fortified sept and the activities of Pentex and the Wyrm in the rainforest have largely ceased by this point. Other possibilities include the Ajaba's caern in Ngorongoro Crater, Bagheera Den Realms in India, and some of the Red Talon caerns in Alaska. No matter the location, it should have strong ties to the Umbra and be extremely isolated. Anything else is too risky.

The date of the concolation is set for two weeks following the Glass Walkers' fall in Europe. It will take about that long to get everyone together, particularly given the fact that some may have to travel across an entire continent just to gain passage to the Umbra. Once everyone arrives, the Garou can begin to lick their wounds and plan a counterattack while they still have the numbers to be an effective fighting force.

Assessing the Damage

The impact of Shinzui's attacks on the Garou Nation is staggering. Never before have the Garou fought such an organized and implacable foe, and as the concolation gets underway they are astonished at just how hard the Weaver has beaten them down. All told, fully eighty percent of the world's Garou have been killed or incapacitated, leaving only a few hundred for the final battles against the Weaver's forces. No one's sure how to react to this news; everyone knew they'd been hit hard, but to learn the strikes had occurred all over the world, and that the werewolves' strength had been reduced on a planetary scale, is simply mind-blowing. There is no more time for politics; the Garou are desperate, and they have to act *now*.

Unwanted Guests

As the Garou plan their next move, their deliberations are interrupted by a most unexpected group of guests, namely the remnants of the Black Spiral Dancers. How they knew of the Garou's concolation, to say nothing of how they managed to find it, is unclear. What is clear, however, is that the Dancers are in a conciliatory mood, and aren't necessarily looking for a fight. If the Garou let them say their piece they indicate that they've been hit by the Weaver even

Burying the Hatchet

One of the most anticipated meetings at the Great Concolation is that between the Margrave Yuri Konietzko and King Jonas Albrecht. Surprisingly, both men seemed to get along fairly well; both have can-do personalities, and the enormity of their current situation (as well as the fact that nobody saw it coming) is not lost on either of them. Their old rivalry now seems petty and foolish, and it is clear to both that they are commanders fighting the same war on different fronts. All they can do now is continue doing what they do best, and coordinate their activities to the best of their abilities. Those who bear witness to the meeting of the two living legends are a bit let down; some expected a duel for dominance at the very least. The fact that both men are willing to put their own pride aside for the greater good is symbolic of the Garou's maturation as a people.

Zhyzhak's Prophecy Fulfilled?

Much ado has been made about Zhyzhak's destiny, wherein she is prophesied to crush the last of the Gaian kings underneath her heel. For the most part, this scenario assumes that prophecy is a red herring, the rant of a madman, since sparking a battle between the Garou and the Dancers during the concolation would be catastrophic. Storytellers who wish to bring the prophecy to fulfillment during their story have a number of options for doing so, however.

First, Albrecht might be ambushed by the Dancers off-panel, killed by Zhyzhak before he ever makes it to the concolation. This might ease the road a bit at the concolation, since there are fewer leaders with differing agendas, but it is sure to be a huge blow to morale.

Second, Zhyzhak and her pack might arrive with the other Dancers as described above, but attack Albrecht despite the urgings of their fellows. If Zhyzhak is successful in crushing Albrecht and his pack, the Gaian Garou have to deal with her before the concolation can proceed. They also have to determine whether Zhyzhak's actions are indicative of the general attitude of the Dancers, or if hers is just one rogue pack.

Finally, Zhyzhak might challenge Albrecht in a ritual fashion, a challenge he is hard-pressed to refuse (and one he cannot possibly win). Once the battle is over, Zhyzhak demands that the other Garou bow to her, or be destroyed. What do the players do?

harder than the Gaian Garou have, and that they're willing to help the Gaians any way they can so long as it undermines the Weaver's efforts. This presents an interesting moral dilemma for the players; the Gaians are desperately short on manpower, but are they willing to work with the very embodiment of everything they've been fighting up until now, even during the final battles of the Apocalypse?

The Metis Returns

Even more surprising (and astonishing) than the arrival of the Black Spiral Dancers is the return of the Perfect Metis, thought lost since he was kidnapped by Adrian Carver years before. The metis' arrival can be handled in a number of ways; if Zhyzhak makes trouble for the Garou, he might make his entrance by killing her outright. Alternately, he might simply arrive with the rest of the Dancers, having disposed of Zhyzhak off-camera. However he shows himself, it is clear by the end of the day that he speaks for the Black Spiral Dancers, and that his is the true voice of the Wyrm.

The Perfect Metis has more to offer to the Garou Nation than simple aid; he has information as well. Assuming he is allowed to speak, he tells them the true nature of the Red Star and its significance, as well as his own role in the battles to come. He also tells them that a critical opportunity is close at hand, and that they may in fact be able to defeat the Weaver's aims once and for all if they are all able to work in concert.

The Weaver Oversteps

Few of the werewolves in the Garou Nation have any doubts as to whether or not they were in the midst of the Apocalypse, but the extent of the Perfect Metis' plan is shocking nonetheless. He proposes that the Garou first launch a massive counterattack against the forces of the Weaver, doing all they can to loosen her hold on the physical realm before launching the next phase of their plan. They then make their way to the Umbra (still accessible in places like Australia, the Amazon, and parts of Africa) and travel to Malfeas itself. Once there, they perform a ritual of great power, offering up their own lives to give the Wyrm the power he needs to break free of the Pattern Web. If the ritual works, the worlds of spirit and flesh will be dissolved as the Wyrm breaks free of the Web and returns to his normal self. The power of the Machine will be crushed, and the Weaver will be given the opportunity to regain her sanity. The cycle will begin anew, rejuvenated by the Garou's sacrifice and overseen by a wiser, more cautious Triat.

The plan is audacious, and it might be the only chance the Garou have to undo the Weaver's madness. But the cost...

Option: Other Players

If you choose not to have the Black Spiral Dancers make an appearance at the concolation, the Garou can learn of the Weaver's missteps through any number of other means. Here are a few examples:

Uktena Elders

Even without the input of the Perfect Metis, the Garou themselves might reach the same conclusions he has. The Uktena are the most likely candidates for this role, as their close ties with the Wyrm creatures they have imprisoned often yield forbidden fruit. Similarly, the Silent Striders might catch a secret or two via their connections to the spirits of the damned, and from there help formulate a plan to free the Wyrm from the Weaver's grasp.

Rides-the-Aether

If the Storyteller is keen on bringing the Nuwisha into the game, this would be a great place to introduce them. No one knows the Umbra better than the werecoyotes, and one in particular named Rides-the-Aether has been looking for the Garou for quite some time. She tells the Garou everything they need to know, and she's also a much more reliable source of information than the Black Spiral Dancers are. She's also likely to tease the Garou mercilessly, which could give the players some laughs after a really tough scenario.

Mary Otafire

Mary Otafire is a Makunguru, one of the white-necked Corax of sub-Saharan Africa. Like Rides-the-Aether, Mary is a master at navigating the Umbra. She's also not half bad at getting around in the physical world, which could prove to be quite helpful in the coming days and weeks. Mary might show up at the concolation by tagging along with Garou from the Ahadi, or she might come on her own (learning secrets is her job, after all). In any event, she might well be privy to all sorts of information on the Balance Wyrm and its movements in the here and now, and thus might serve as a means of kick-starting the plan to free the Wyrm from his bondage.

The Players

Finally, although this would take plenty of extra work, don't rule out the possibility of letting the player characters be the ones to gather the key bits of information and put together their particular plan. Obviously, this approach requires much more lead time, by placing information for them to find in stories that begin well before you start running *Weaver Ascendant*. On the other hand, this approach gets the players involved like no other and lets them feel as if they've truly earned their place at the head of the Garou vanguard.

The Gathering of the Gurahl

While the Garou are gathering for their concolation, an altogether different sort of gathering is taking place halfway around the world. This is the gathering of the Gurahl, initiated by the current Great Grandfather of Bears, and it is here that the Gurahl discuss how they might help Gaia by either curing the Weaver of her madness or freeing the Wyrm from her clutches. Both tasks are beyond them directly, and they know this. However, if they had the Garou as their allies, they might have a chance at making either one (or both) a reality.

Storytellers might find the Gurahl helpful for a number of reasons. First, it is they who likely have the rites needed to heal the Wyrm of his madness and give him the strength he needs to break free of the Pattern Web. But more importantly, drawing the Gurahl into the game gives them a sense of relevance while simultaneously freeing up the Garou for other, more immediate tasks — which means the action stays focused on them. That is, at the end of the day, the point of the game, so this is an option worth considering.

The Most Ancient of Bears

The champion of the Gurahl, The Most Ancient of Bears, deserves special mention. As prophesied, the ancient Gurahl has come during the End Times to aid his children in need. He is the most powerful ritemaster in the world, more powerful than any Garou Theurge, and he has the knowledge needed to make the Wyrm's liberation a reality. This is all contingent, however, on getting the Garou to give the Gurahl a second thought, which might well be difficult.

If any of the player characters have connections with the Gurahl, now would be a good time to tell them about the gathering so that they can bring it to the attention of the elders of the Garou Nation. The Perfect Metis supports the idea of approaching the werebears for aid, and there are some excellent roleplaying opportunities to be had in solidifying such an alliance. Such an alliance is well worth the effort; in addition to their raw utilitarian value, the prospect of formally making amends with the Gurahl should fill the Garou with both hope and joy. Additionally, having a being as powerful as The Most Ancient of Bears the Garou's side also boosts the morale of the tribes, making the days ahead just a little bit easier.

Striking Back

While the Garou have been formulating a game plan for dealing with the Weaver and her minions, the former's hold on the realms of flesh and spirit has been solidifying. Undermining that icy grip is the Garou's top priority, since they cannot even reach the Umbra given the current state of the world. The methods the Garou take to loosen the Weaver's grip vary considerably depending on the region of the world and the other supernatural beings the Garou can call upon for aid. The PCs might stumble across any of the following plot possibilities, and the Storyteller is encouraged to either choose one of the following or use them as inspiration for something else entirely.

North America

The Garou of North America, like their human Kin, are products of an eminently capitalist society. While this means that they are closer to the Weaver, and hence more removed from their wolf side, than the other Garou roaming the world, it also means they are much more adept as using the cities of the continent to best advantage. It should thus come as no surprise to learn that the North American Garou came through Shinzui's purges with the fewest casualties, and are hence in the best position to launch a counterattack once their leaders return from the Great Concolation.

There are two main scenarios to work with in the United States and Canada: the first has been dubbed Operation: Full Disclosure, a massive electronic warfare campaign designed to disrupt the Weaver's activities by focusing the authorities' attention on other supernatural activity across the continent. Operation: Full Disclosure is, in fact, a global campaign, but it is described here due to the fact that its roots are in Los Angeles.

Operating in tandem with Operation: Full Disclosure is an extensive sabotage campaign, wherein the Garou and their allies strike at targets of opportunity using the chaos of the Glass Walkers' electronic warfare as cover. This is where the more militant Garou of the nation have their day, and it is one of the quickest and easiest ways to drop the player characters right into the thick of the action.

Operation: Full Disclosure

As the Glass Walkers were being dismantled in Europe, several of their counterparts in North America were going into hiding, safeguarding their secrets until the time came to strike back against their foes. That time has come, and the remnants of the tribe are ready to get some payback. Shortly before Shinzui embarked

on its campaign of extermination, one pack of Random Interrupts gained the edge they needed to fight the Weaver on their own terms. Now the time is right to press that advantage to the hilt, lashing out at computer networks around the globe in an effort to throw the entire industrialized world into chaos. The chaos thus created provides ample cover for the sabotage efforts of the other tribes.

Operation: Full Disclosure begins simply enough. The Random Interrupts begin by essentially hacking the brain of a cyber-augmented Ratkin named Headcase, using the Ratkin as both a terminal and a firewall in their efforts to hack into and manipulate computer mainframes around the world. Their weapon of choice is a program known as Vulcan AEI, a high-end command interface that gives its user superuser privileges once it is installed in a mainframe. In contrast to the second version of the program, which would only function correctly after a fresh install in the terminal to be manipulated, version 3.0 works perfectly well across networks of all sorts. This means the program can be installed in a mobile terminal — in this case, the hardware in Headcase's skull — and used to gain control of any computer network in the world. That network can then be manipulated without limit, in any way the user desires.

Headcase, Mutilated Ratkin Engineer

Headcase is a Ratkin who, shortly after his First Change, was captured by agents of Pentex and subjected to horrific experiments involving cybernetic "enhancements." In addition to having much of his body replaced with bionic substitutes, his brain and nervous system were augmented with neural microprocessors and communications devices. In game terms, he can interface with any computer system he can physically access, and the difficulties for all computer rolls are halved. All is not sunshine and roses, however; the process of having his body so radically changed has driven Headcase mad, to the point where nearly all of his attention at any given time is focused on destroying "the lab people," his term for scientists and the agents of control.

Vulcan AEI ver. 3.0

Vulcan AEI 3.0 is a fetish of frightening power. Like its predecessor, it is an advanced developer's environment called an AEI (Affordance Engineering Interface) designed to give its users direct and intuitive control over any firmware/software-driven system its native terminal can access. Unlike its predecessor, Vulcan 3.0 *can* operate over networks. This means that any computerized system accessible via direct connection (i.e., any system connected to the Internet) or via remote communication (computer systems with networking capability) can be accessed and controlled via Vulcan 3.0. This means the extent of users' control over the computerized world is limited only by their imagination, which makes the fetish both highly sought-after and extremely dangerous to possess.

Users should note that Vulcan 3.0 does not cloak their identity in any way; they can be tracked and identified as well as any computer user can, and virtually anyone at risk of attack will have a vested interest in silencing the fetish's user. Thus, while the Vulcan interface is exceedingly powerful, it is also exceedingly dangerous, meaning it must be handled with the utmost care.

The Broadcast

While the other Garou tribes begin to attack the Weaver in their own ways, Icepick and his pack announce the beginnings of Operation: Full Disclosure in a particularly dramatic way: in short, they access and gain control over every broadcast system on the planet, be it television, radio, or even cellular phone networks, and they use this control to put their enemies under a microscope. Icepick, the pack's alpha, tells the world that all is not as it seems, and that a lot of people have been manipulating the public for a very long time. He blows the whistle on a dozen corporations, exposing all their dirty laundry for the whole world to see. Everyone's a target — vampires, Pentex executives, the scientists at DNA, Shinzui's obviously illegal activities, and anything else the pack can think of. It doesn't stop with the Broadcast — pack members send e-mail messages to those with something to gain from an enemy's downfall, and they make phone calls asking people if they knew about their boss' skeleton in the closet. The sheer volume of information involved is staggering, and while vampires are generally very good at manipulating the human realm the power of Vulcan 3.0 is something they just aren't prepared to deal with. After a certain point, it doesn't even matter whether or not the things the Interrupts are saying are true — all that matters is the fact that people, a *lot* of people, are now asking all the wrong questions. Naturally, the fallout from the Broadcast and its associated activities is significant, but that's more or less the point of the exercise to begin with.

The targets of opportunity for the Interrupts are legion. Shinzui databases are cracked open and displayed to the world, and supernaturals of all stripes (particularly Ventrue and Giovanni vampires) are outed in spectacular fashion. This information is conveyed to the public in any number of ways: some of it is broadcast on television, some on radio, some on Internet web sites. Cellular phone networks prove to

be quite useful in this capacity, as business folk receive calls with all sorts of incriminating information against their rivals. Even Technocrat mages are revealed for who and what they are, and all their efforts to launch disinformation campaigns fail utterly (since superuser control of the system allows one to shut all computerized elements of those campaigns down before they even get started). Even the power of the Machine is not enough to stop Headcase and his allies; while they certainly cannot threaten the supernal directly, they are nonetheless slippery enough to evade its control.

The players can involve themselves in this campaign in a number of ways. First, they can lead vigilante posses to investigate the targets of the operation, fomenting chaos wherever they go in an effort to break the Weaver's control over the masses. This is difficult, since the masses are predisposed to obey the dictates of those in control, but it should be quite possible, especially with the right Gifts. Also, the characters can act as bodyguards for the pack in question, since every Tom, Dick, and Harry working for the Weaver (and anyone outed by the Broadcast) will be gunning for their heads. Finally, if the characters have some direct contact with the agents of the Weaver themselves, they may take on the role of the Random Interrupts pack, or even that of Headcase. All they really need is the fetish and the cybernetics and they're good to go.

A Gossip's Paradise — Bastet and Corax

Not surprisingly, Full Disclosure is a perfect way to give the Bastet and the Corax in your chronicle something to do while the Garou organize their efforts to strike back against the Weaver. These two Changing Breeds live for learning and investigating secrets, and their knowledge might prove extremely helpful to the Garou looking to out the world's supernaturals. They can also tell the Random Interrupts all sorts of things that never make their way to a computer disk, and that makes them especially helpful in developing or undeveloped countries that are less industrialized than the nations of Western civilization.

Two characters that might prove useful in this regard are presented elsewhere in this book. The first, Shikha Mirshekari, is an Indian Bagheera with well-established ties to many Indian septs of Garou, particularly the Silver Fangs and the Glass Walkers. She gleefully provides juicy tidbits of information on South Asia's power players, particularly those associated with Shinzui's Bombay offices (acquired during the Pentex takeover). Also of note is Mary Otafire, an African Corax whose business interests plant her firmly in the United States and Europe. She has dirt on everybody who's anybody, and the spirit of cooperation moves her as much as it does anybody. She also has plenty of contacts both among the Corax and within the Ahadi, so she can likely learn anything she doesn't already know should the need arise.

Riots

Some Garou take the impending Apocalypse as an opportunity to go all military on folks, while others embrace the wonders of technology to cut the Weaver's many legs out from underneath her. That's fine and all, but for some Garou the name of the game is pure, unadulterated chaos, and they should have their day in the sun as much as anyone.

This scenario is best for packs with particularly charismatic members, the sorts of people that are good at starting trouble. High-ranking Bone Gnawers or Ratkin are ideal, as they have the Gifts they need to *really* stir things up. In any event, the point of the endeavor is to create absolute pandemonium over as large a territory as possible, turning the unwashed masses against the minions of law and order and using the ensuing chaos to take out select targets within the Weaver's hierarchy. Tag teaming with the Red Talons (see below) is a great way to make this scenario really take off. Between the two tribes and the Ratkin, Gaia's defenders can have entire cities ready to tear the Weaver apart.

Sabotage, Industrial and Otherwise

With the commencement of Operation: Full Disclosure and the call for war against the Weaver, the cities of the world become a saboteur's paradise. The Garou cannot attack the Weaver and her minions openly, since their numbers have been reduced to a mere handful. They can, however, make guerilla raids against Weaver facilities, lashing out with plastic explosives and industrial sabotage where more traditional methods of battle are inappropriate.

The Ragabash of the world couldn't be happier.

Storytellers who choose to go this route should present their players with a number of tempting targets, providing floor plans and timetables as needed so that the characters can plan their strikes accordingly. Don't worry too much about weaponry and gear; this is, after all, the end of the world, so let the players go out with a bang if they really want to. Acquiring equipment should be easy, given the antics of the Random Interrupts lately; players and storytellers alike are encouraged to let their imaginations run wild and play the scenario to the hilt. And

hey, if the characters live they can even proceed to the next phase of the story. Even if they don't, though, this is as good a way as any to go; cracking the shell of the Weaver in the physical realm counts for a lot, and it gives other Garou packs the opportunity they need to shatter the Pattern Web in the Umbra.

Evil Turns on Itself

Since it is less developed than most of the industrialized nations of the world, Mexico is not affected by Operation: Full Disclosure to quite the same degree as its northern neighbor. That doesn't mean it's a boring place, however. Indeed, the wars between the Sabbat vampires and the Mexican Shadow Lords are as fierce as they've ever been, and the Lords are bolstered by reinforcements in the form of a pair of Texas-based Get of Fenris septs. The two tribes are hammering the vampire nests in Mexico City and Tijuana mercilessly, using the vampires' internal disorganization to cut them to pieces. While this conflict does not affect the Weaver or her minions directly, it does destabilize the entire region, which in turn loosens the Weaver's grip in other areas as well. Players with an interest in the Sept of the Earth Mother, described in **Tribebook: Shadow Lords**, will find that sept extremely active, as they try to channel the battles with the vampires into a productive means to undermining the Weaver's control in Mexico.

South America

Not surprisingly, Shinzui Industries has little interest in the Amazon rainforest basin. Accordingly, once the company acquired Magadon, Incorporated it relocated all of that corporation's Amazon holdings to North America, abandoning the Wyrm's efforts to destroy the Amazon and all it contained. This means that the Garou's war against Pentex is effectively over, which in turn leaves a bunch of Garou out of touch with the current war the rest of their kind are fighting. Fortunately, they are fairly adaptable beasts, and in the wake of the Great Concolation they have begun to secure the Amazon for use as a waypoint in the Garou's journey to the Umbra.

Upon the withdrawal of Pentex's agents from the Amazon basin, the local shapeshifters in the region issue a none-too-subtle ultimatum to the Garou: get the hell out, or face the consequences. The fact that the Garou have made efforts to placate the rage of the Balam is admirable, and the Bastet recognize these efforts by allowing the Garou to leave in peace. But these are not the werewolves' territories, and the Balam will not tolerate intruders for even a second longer than is absolutely necessary.

This leaves the Garou in a bind: the spirit of Gaia is stronger in the rainforest than anywhere else on Earth,

and that means the Garou might still be able to step sideways into the Umbra if only the Fera would grant them access to some of their most sacred spaces. If the players have some time invested in an Amazon War chronicle they might find a story involving the Garou's negotiations with the Balam and the Mokolé for use of their lands intriguing, and a welcome break from the acts of sabotage they've been waging thus far.

Mokolé on the Rampage

While it's true that the Garou have never really understood the Mokolé and how they operate, their most recent actions are simply indescribable. Never before has the Memory of Gaia acted in such a direct fashion, and never before has Gaia's fury been made manifest in such a blatant manner. It happens all around the world — Bombay, Hong Kong, Manilla, Miami, Manaus, Lagos, Cairo, Sydney, and a dozen other cities, all prisoners of the Weaver's wrath. But then the Dinosaur Kings return to the world, beasts over a hundred feet long and filled with all the Rage of a thousand suns. Some urban Garou have likened the Mokolé's rampage to those seen in the old Toho monster films, and they're not far wrong. Gaia's might is strong in them, and the Garou could hardly ask for a better way to rend the Veil and throw all of humanity into a panic. The Mokolé's actions do little to battle the Weaver directly, but that isn't their intent — they only have to destabilize her hold on the physical realm, and in that respect they succeed spectacularly.

For Garou, of course, the benefits of the Mokolé rampage are obvious — they are cover for precision strikes against the offices of Shinzui and other Weaver agencies in the cities in question. This stunt only works in the tropics, of course (since that's where the Mokolé are found), but the Garou aren't picky — they'll take what distractions they can get, and rely on other angles of attack for cities outside the Mokolé's area of influence. In the meantime, the players' Garou have plenty to do if they happen to be located near a Mokolé nest.

Europe

Thunder's Shadow

The Shadow Lords of Europe aren't directly tied to Operation: Full Disclosure, but that won't stop them from taking full advantage of the chaos it creates. Their ancient vampire foes in Eastern Europe are thrown into disarray by the Broadcast and all the events that follow, and the Lords use that moment of weakness to tear them to pieces. Since Margrave Konietzko has been courting the Black Furies and the Red Talons as allies, his strength is such that the divided vampires are easy prey.

Building a Proper Monster

Building Mokolé so that they're properly intimidating might prove difficult, so here are some suggestions for getting the most bang for your storytelling buck out of the beasts.

- The Mokolé involved in the rampage, at least the ones who are rather large and intimidating beasts, are likely Rising or Setting Suns. The other aspects are involved, of course, but their tasks are most likely more like those of the Garou and their allies; while the warriors (and warders) create confusion, the others make more surgical strikes against targets of opportunity.
- The rampaging Mokolé are likely suchids, since suchid Mokolé have the Gnosis needed to create the most impressive Archid forms. By investing in a bit of extra initial Gnosis (raising the Mokolé's total to around 6-8) the suchid's Archid form can be made into a truly impressive beast.
- The Mokolé's Archid form is key. Sinking 3-5 points of Gnosis into Huge Size is a must if the rampaging werecrocodiles are to be effective, as this gives them the Stamina they need to soak, well, just about anything. It also gives them the health levels needed to last for a very long time. Likewise, Armor is also a useful Archid trait, particularly when paired with Gifts such as Armor of the Tortoise.
- Don't underestimate the value of weaponry. Horns, Long Teeth, Terrible Claws, and Tail Blades/Spikes each only add one die to the Mokolé's attacks (at best), but they're great for shock value. Add in Upright Walking or perhaps Thorns and nobody will even think about messing with the monster in their midst.
- Fear is a necessary part of the whole endeavor. The Gift Dragonfear allows the Mokolé visit the Delirium even on Awakened creatures, and it is particularly potent when paired with the Archid trait Dragon Masque. By attacking in this manner even the Weaver's Drones and other creatures such as vampires and mages shake in their boots at the merest glimpse of the Mokolé, and that makes them easy pickings for the Mokolé's friends and allies.

The combination of terror and gigantic Archid forms should be enough to destabilize virtually any supernatural operation, no matter who is involved. Storytellers should use this tactic sparingly, though, as it can get old really fast.

Griffon's Rage

For a variety of reasons, the Red Talons have never really gotten along with the Ratkin. The Talons see the Ratkin's Kin (to say nothing of the Ratkin themselves) as food, and it's difficult to get past the whole city thing. Add in the Ratkin's penchant for spreading disease and being generally unpleasant individuals, and you have the makings of some serious disagreements. But these are the End Times, and such trivialities need to be set aside. In the days following Shinzui's purges in Europe, some of the more progressive Talons out there have taken it upon themselves to think outside the box a bit and consider the advantages an alliance with the Ratkin might provide. For you see, the one thing the Talons and the Ratkin have in common is an abiding hatred for humanity, and with enough hatred even the strangest of bedfellows can become staunch allies.

Obviously, simply slaughtering humans left and right (entertaining though that might be) won't accomplish much at this late date. However, introducing virulent diseases to the human populace shortly before selected details are offered up about Project: Reaper (via the Glass Walkers) is another matter. This would enrage the humans, turning them against the beings they believe to be responsible for their plight. In a similar vein, attributing the crazed behavior of man-eating wolves to out-of-control diseases (created by the same fine folks who created Project: Reaper) would also go a long way toward getting the unwashed masses all riled up. Of course, managing such a plot requires a fair bit of finesse, but it's nothing the Garou and their allies can't handle. The goal here is a riot of distraction, and there's no one better suited to the task than the Ratkin and the Red Talons.

Every Dog Has His Day

As the Lords destroy their ancient foes, the Garou of Western Europe draw their allies together in an effort to weaken Shinzui's influence across the continent. The backbone of the Garou in this region is, oddly enough, the Bone Gnawers, and since they were one of the few tribes to escape Shinzui's purges more-or-less intact they have become the de facto leaders of all of the Garou west of the Balkans. As with the Garou in North America, the standard tactics for the European packs include acts of sabotage and terrorism. Anything that tears Shinzui down is acceptable, especially if it weakens the nigh-impassable Gauntlet in the process.

Terror, Inc.

While the remnants of the Glass Walkers make their move to co-opt the computer networks of the world, the Black Spiral Dancers take a more direct route toward shattering the Weaver's control of reality — they work to sow terror so that panic will bloom. Owing to the fact that he is in fact a possessed Garou, the Perfect Metis has some supernatural powers above and beyond those normally granted to the Wyrm's werewolves. One of these is a greatly enhanced form of the Delirium, one that works even on Awakened beings. This is thus the perfect way to subvert the Weaver's control of her Drones, since even the strongest of them is no match for the raw, animalistic horror the Perfect Metis can instill within them. As the metis and his followers strike, rending the Veil with abandon, the earthly minions of the Weaver are torn to pieces. The Perfect Metis is not invincible, of course, and Shinzui's Drones are not the only agents the Weaver has acting in the physical realm, but the power of the Spirals is nonetheless awesome to behold.

In addition to tearing at Shinzui's foundations, the Spirals have another quest in mind: they want to awaken the Zmei, and put them to work spreading chaos throughout the known world. Nothing can stand in the way of these beasts; even the awesome might of the Mokolé is no match for their power. Of course, just finding the beasts is no small matter; the Spirals have been attempting such a thing for years without much success. But the Storyteller might rule that the Perfect Metis has been gifted with such knowledge, and since the Garou likely won't stand in the Spirals' way (odd, but none can deny the fact that the Wyrm is no longer the true enemy of Gaia) they should be able to find the sleeping dragons if they put their minds to it. Awakening the beasts requires a potent rite (described in the Appendix), but once they're released from the spells that bind them to the Earth they are free to act as they wish. The results aren't pretty, but they certainly disrupt the Weaver's hold on Europe (and perhaps Asia and the Americas) in a major way.

Many players might balk at the idea of letting the Black Spiral Dancers run amok in their cities, and with good reason. These are creatures of Rage that have been utterly consumed by darkness, and they make the worst of humanity look… well, not benign, but a whole lot less extreme. But players have to remember that these *are* the End Times; the lives of a few humans really are meaningless in the grand scheme of things, because if the Weaver retains control that's it — game over. The key to the

Spirals' motivation now is pure, unadulterated destruction, and in that at least they serve the original intent of the Balance Wyrm. They are no less corrupt than they have ever been, but at least now they're striking openly instead of skulking in shadows. Players should thus be encouraged to leave them be, using their madness to cloak other, more productive activities.

Africa

The Ahadi

For the most part, Pentex and its subsidiaries have had great difficulty making inroads into Africa, largely due to the vigilance of the continent's Fera guardians. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule — Egypt has long been home to a branch of Endron Oil, and Harold and Harold Mining Corporation has recently established a branch office in Johannesburg, South Africa. Smaller offices can be found in Nairobi, Lagos, and a handful of other cities across the continent. However, for the most part Black Tooth and his pride, genocidal bastards that they were, did a decent job of forcing Pentex and its subsidiaries to give the continent a wide berth. It should come as no surprise to learn, then, that Shinzui does likewise. Shinzui has, in fact, shut down most of Pentex's branch offices in Africa, leaving only the Endron facilities in Egypt and Lagos up and running.

As one might imagine, Walks-With-Might and the other leaders of the Ahadi have something to say about that.

Operation: Full Disclosure hit Egypt like a hammer, and Walks-With-Might, already keen on making war with Africa's vampires, tore through all the leeches of Cairo like an avatar of Death itself. He found that many of the vampires had acquired prominent positions throughout the Egyptian government, but he didn't care; death and slaughter were his meat and drink, and all the other Fera were wise enough to get out of his way, consequences be damned. Egypt is a shambles now, but the vampires are dead and Endron's foothold in the region has been torn to pieces. If the world survives the coming Apocalypse, the land of Khem might even be restored to its former grandeur.

To the south, the Simba and the Ajaba launch strikes against the oil refineries in South Africa and the neighboring lands. They also struggle to deal with the menace that dwells in the heart of the Kalahari desert, a great spirit of unimaginable power. Should the Fera make peace with the spirit, it might be a potent ally against the Weaver-spirits who lock the Umbra in a vice-like grip. But should they fail, the spirit will annihilate them to a man.

No matter their battles, the eyes of the Ahadi Breeds turn toward the Congo basin when all is said and done. If they can manage to stabilize this region, the Garou can use it as a portal into the Umbra — presuming they can get the Congo Mokolé to go along with the idea. Ahadi members they might be, but territory is territory no matter one's allegiances.

Strange Bedfellows

Characters who have run through the story *Anthelios Raging* might experience some déjà vu as they run into many of the same characters once again. Assuming they survived their bids to capture or destroy the metis cub, the Hive of the Broken Star and the Hive of the Wyrm's Eye might both make appearances here, and the roleplaying opportunities they present might be pretty intense. In the case of the Hive of the Wyrm's Eye, Eeyarlagh Twice-Born is no doubt feeling smug and superior. The metis cub not only turned out to be the leader of the Black Spiral Dancers, but also wound up being a savior of sorts for the Wyrm and, by extension, the Triat. Her pack is much more focused and organized than those of most Dancers, and they follow the Perfect Metis with borderline religious fervor.

By contrast, S'rhaagh Iron Voice of the Hive of the Broken Star is confused and angry, enraged by the fact that his prediction for the metis was so badly misinterpreted. The voices in his head told him to dedicate the metis' soul to the Wyrm, and he assumed that that meant the cub was to be sacrificed. How ironic, then, that the voices attempting to guide him wanted exactly the opposite. S'rhaagh and his pack are even more insane and violent than most Dancers, and they may seek revenge on the characters, other Gaian Garou, or even the Perfect Metis himself. The players might well find themselves working feverishly to keep the Hive of the Broken Star from undermining their efforts, which can sidetrack them from more important tasks.

Asia

The Remnants of the Beast Courts

The Beast Courts of the Emerald Mother have been shattered, of that there is no doubt. The hengeyokai, however, are another matter. The Zhong Lung remain powerful and centered, and the other shapeshifters of the East follow their lead in this, the Age of Sorrow. Disaster has come to the Beast Courts, but the sentai remain strong and focused, and they are prepared to ensure that Shinzui reaps the whirlwind for all the terrible things it has done. And it is not just hengeyokai who fight these battles—the Boli Zouhisze also fight, in an effort to overcome their shame at having inadvertently given birth to Shinzui.

The sentai's targets are many and varied: Shinzui's offices in Tokyo are a natural start, as are their holdings in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and Beijing. But they also seek to reclaim their dragon nests, in hopes that some might prove able to break through the wall between worlds. This is unlikely, but if they can regain the Stargazer caerns in Tibet they might have a chance of piercing the Weaver's madness and gathering with the Garou in their quest to free the Wyrm.

Though they were invited to the Grand Concolation of the Garou, whether or not any hengeyokai showed up is entirely at the discretion of the Storyteller. Similarly, they might or might not have knowledge of the particulars of Operation: Full Disclosure. If they do not, they are likely as confused as Shinzui and its operatives are at the fallout associated with the Garou's initiatives, but canny *shen* might be able to take advantage of the weaknesses the operation reveals to them and the world.

India

In contrast to the hengeyokai, the Fera of India are both reasonably intact and fully in step with the activities of the Garou. The Bagheera play a central role in ensuring the Operation: Full Disclosure goes off without a hitch in Bombay and India's other heavily urbanized regions, providing all the information they can to Glass Walkers around the world. They work closely with the Khan and the Indian Simba, as well as the Makara Mokolé, the Nagah, the Ratkin, and a number of Garou tribes (particularly House Blood Red Crest and the Glass Walkers, but also the Stargazers, the Bone Gnawers, the Silent Striders, and a number of displaced Hakken). Given time, the cooperation exhibited here would surely blossom into an alliance akin to that of the Beast Courts or the Ahadi of Africa; as it is, the Fera and their Garou allies will have to settle for restoring Gaia's faith during the End Times.

Australia

Fighting for the Dreamtime

Shinzui has a small presence in Australia, but their main interest lies in shutting down the Garou's access to the Dreamtime, and the Umbra associated therewith. To this end, they have made repeated efforts to gain control of the Sept of the Waking Dream.

It isn't going well.

The madness of the Bunyip spirits infesting the Dreamtime is making Drone activity in the Australian Outback near impossible, and the local Uktena aren't helping much. Add to that a number of *extremely* angry Gumagan Mokolé and the end result is a caern that even now remains firmly in Gaian hands. The only problem lies with the fact that it's pretty much in the middle of nowhere, which is great for rites and such but not very helpful when the Garou are fighting their battles continents away. By this point, trekking inland to the caern might well be difficult enough for Gaia's

champions that they search for alternative methods of reaching the Umbra. The sharks certainly begin to look inviting when the only usable caern is in the middle of a desert wasteland.

If the player characters happen to be in Australia once the Garou begin their counterattack against the Weaver, they might try negotiating a truce with the spirits of the Bunyip (or perhaps with Rainbow Serpent's brood) in an effort to make the desert passable for them. While this is a great roleplaying opportunity, it suffers from the difficulty of being a lengthy and time-consuming process, meaning the characters might not be able to do any good in the time they're allotted.

The Great Barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef represents one of the greatest concentrations of Gaia's power on the planet. While it is besieged with threats both incidental and malign, the spirit of the reef remains strong. It is, however, threatened by minions of the Weaver. Unlike the caerns the Garou have spread across the surface world, Shinzui cannot establish control of the reef simply by occupying it. Those who wish to use its power can simply access it by swimming underwater, meaning Shinzui has to take more drastic measures to ensure that the caern remains out of reach of Gaia's warriors: the Weaver's Drones are, in fact, intent on destroying the reef.

If the player characters are in Australia, they might learn about Shinzui's plans any number of ways. The Glass Walkers associated with Operation: Full Disclosure might relay the information to strike teams in the area (including the characters). Alternately, the characters might learn of the corporation's plans by interrogating a Drone or even one of Shinzui's human pawns. If the characters have established peaceful (albeit shaky) contact with the Rokea, the weresharks might even come to them for aid. No matter how they learn of the Reef's plight, they have to do everything in their power to save it. It is, after all, one of the few remaining ways they can actually reach the Umbra now that the Weaver has made the wall between worlds all but impassable.

Freeing the Wyrm

With the Garou striking on multiple fronts, the Weaver's control of the physical Realm fractures. This is not to say that the Garou have won the war, however; far from it. Rather, their sustained assaults against the minions of the Weaver give them the opening they need to scatter into the Umbra, and from there to make their way to Malfeas where they hope to free the Wyrm from its prison. Before they can fight that final battle, however, they have to actually reach the Umbra — no small matter given the nature of the times.

Reaching the Umbra

In kinder times, the Garou could simply step sideways to enter the Umbra. In most of the world, however, that is no longer possible — the wall between worlds has become completely calcified, resulting in a Gauntlet well over 10 for most of the world. There are, however, a number of alternatives to merely stepping sideways; some of the most engaging possibilities are described below.

Umbral Glades

Perhaps the easiest way to traverse the Umbra during the era of the Weaver is via a Gurahl Umbral Glade, a lair in the physical world that opens up directly into the Umbra. This option for reaching the Umbra is particularly appropriate if the Garou have Gurahl allies (which they probably want anyway, since the werebears can make their lives *much* easier when the time comes to perform the rites needed to free the Wyrm), or if they've made peaceful contact with the Great Grandfather of Bears and his retinue (as described above).

If the Garou haven't made contact with the Gurahl as of yet, roleplaying their contact with the player characters might make for a good side story. This is a great way to stick the players' characters in the middle of the action, as the role of the Gurahl is expanding now that the Apocalypse is nigh. Bringing the werebears to the Garou during their moment of crisis is quite a quest, and one that could easily decide the fate of the world.

Gaia's Sacred Spaces

The Mokolé aren't masters of Umbral travel, but the places they call home are often some of the most powerful manifestations of Gaia's power in all the world. If the Garou happen to be in one of these places — the Australian Outback, the Amazon River basin, the Congo River basin, the Serengeti plains of East Africa, or a similar locale, the local Mokolé might be convinced to lead the Garou to the most sacred of their spaces. This in turn allows the Garou to step sideways (though not easily; the Gauntlet is still 8 at least, and more likely 9 or 10). Convincing the Mokolé to help them out is not easy, but if the werecrocodiles are former allies, or are part of a shifter alliance (such as the Ahadi or the Beast Courts), they might be reasonable about the whole affair.

The Mokolé aren't known for their hospitality, but a few are curious enough about the Garou that they're willing to help the werewolves out, particularly during the End Times. One such Mokolé is Guides-

The Great Barrier Reef

If the characters are based in Australia and have managed to forestall the destruction of the Great Barrier Reef, they find that reaching the Umbra is much easier than they might have expected: the spirit of the reef is incredibly strong, and even the Weaver's machinations cannot sever its connection with the Umbra. Werewolf characters, and Fera characters with the appropriate Gifts, may step sideways here against a Gauntlet of 9. It isn't easy, and it takes awhile, but they can do it. Note that the characters need a way to breathe water in any event. The Dimwater Gift: Drown can take care of this.

Characters in other parts of the world who have Rokea ties might also be able to make use of the reef, presuming Shinzui or other Weaver-spirits haven't destroyed it. If a Dimwater Rokea of sufficient rank is willing, she can use the Gift: Swim Undersea's Bloodstream to transport the characters from any given grotto in the world to the Great Barrier Reef. Doing so is no small matter, and the Rokea probably aren't keen on such an idea in any case, but it remains an option if the characters can sufficiently plead their case.

the-Lost, a caiman who works as a guide in the more touristy parts of the Amazon. He can show the Garou the places that remain bastions of Gaia's strength, and he's used to working under adverse conditions. He is described in the Appendix.

Coyote's Laugh

The Nuwisha taught the Garou everything they know about stepping sideways, but they saved some of the best tricks for themselves. While their caerns are no more useful than those of the Garou are, their Gifts, particularly those of the Umbral Dansers, are another matter entirely. These allow the werecoyotes to shunt people into the Umbra regardless of the strength of the local Gauntlet, and some Nuwisha can even create an Umbral gateway — again, regardless of the strength of the local Gauntlet. These abilities make the Nuwisha particularly useful allies, especially now that crossing the Gauntlet is all but impossible.

If the players learned of the Wyrm's condition and the current state of Umbral affairs from Rides-the-Aether, she happily leads them into the Umbra once they complete their assaults against the Weaver. The Garou needn't worry about finding her — she seems to have a knack for being in the right place at the right time.

Swimming Sideways

If the Garou have Rokea allies, they might reach the Umbra through a rather unusual route — by swimming sideways. This sort of thing has never before been attempted, but the Rokea know full well that the touch of the spirits above rarely extends far below. That logic holds now as well as it ever did — the Weaver's influence has not yet extended to the deep trenches of Sea, and the Rokea can likely still swim sideways if they're willing to risk the journey. Naturally, traveling to the Umbra via Sea is a risky endeavor. It is, in fact, an absolutely ludicrous idea. But if the Garou no longer have access to the most powerful concentrations of Gaia's power, this method may well be their only remaining option.

Swimming sideways via an ocean trench is a viable (albeit risky) option for a Rokea, but taking Garou along on such a journey is another matter altogether. That said, there are ways. The Dimwater Gift: Drown allows its target to breathe water for one hour per success, and the Darkwater Gift: Blood of the Deeps allows the user to survive the intense pressures and cold of the sea for three hours per success. Blood of the Deeps is not normally usable on others, but interested Rokea might go on an Umbral quest (presumably while the Garou are involved with their attacks on the Weaver) to learn a variant that is. From there, the Rokea, the Garou, and one or more Rorquals have to make the journey to the depths of Sea, where the Garou can still make the journey between worlds.

The Garou's negotiation of the deeps is quite possibly a story in itself, and while exploring it further is beyond the scope of this scenario Storytellers are encouraged to play it up as much as possible. The books **Rokea** and **World of Darkness: Blood-Dimmed Tides** should be helpful in this regard.

Adrian Carver

If none of the players have another way to access the Umbra, one option remains — but they won't like it. This involves the Ferectoi fomor named Adrian Carver, whom the players might have seen once before — when he was stealing the Perfect Metis right out from under their noses. Regardless of whether or not they've met before, Carver has in his possession an item they might find extremely useful — a Pretanic Talisman. This potent device actually opens a portal directly to Malfeas, thus allowing the characters to not only cross the barrier between worlds, but also actually bypass the Umbral journey most other Garou will have to make. They do, however, have to depart the physical world and arrive in Malfeas on Carver's terms, which are likely to be quite unpleasant. This is clearly

a scenario of last resort, but if the players are truly stuck for ideas, or are stuck in a place that doesn't lend itself to other means of crossing the Gauntlet, this option lets them get back in the game.

Navigating the Umbra

Of course, crossing the barrier between worlds is only part of the problem. Once the characters make it to the Umbra, they have to figure out how to get to Malfeas — and they have to do it while Weaver spirits are swarming through the Near Umbra. While some Garou might have Gifts that make travel a non-issue, the bulk of the Garou Nation (and, presumably, the players' pack) can probably benefit from some outside assistance. Some suggestions are given below.

The Tenere

Since the Machine awoke and began influencing the Weaver's thoughts and activities, the Tenere have been playing at being her servants, hoping to hide the extent of their own efforts to undermine her influence in the Umbra. The Garou might be able to use that to their advantage; none can hide the werewolves so well as those who are at home in the Weaver's webs, and the Ananasi's loyalty to the Weaver has always been overstated. If some Garou recognize that fact, it might be possible to enlist them as allies in the Garou's quest to free the Wyrm from his prison. This is a dangerous game, however; the Tenere (and, indeed, the Ananasi as a whole) have their own plans for the various members of the Triat, and the Garou will never know which side of the fence their supposed benefactors' loyalties lie.

If you think it appropriate, you can use the Tenere Larius to draw the player characters into the Ananasi plot to free Ananasa and, ultimately, assassinate the Weaver. This can make for an excellent story, but bear in mind that it shifts the focus from the Garou and the Triat to the Garou and the Ananasi, which in turn changes the nature of the game considerably. If the players have little interest in the Ananasi, this is probably not the scenario for them.

The Corax

In contrast to the Ananasi, the virtues of the Corax are both straightforward and innocuous. In short, they make excellent Umbral guides, and their knowledge of the Deep Umbra is surprisingly detailed. Mary Otafire is a good example of such a bird, and she can easily guide the Garou straight to Malfeas (though she would likely do so under protest). She isn't much help getting past the spider spirits infesting the Near Umbra, but should the characters manage to avoid them the rest of their journey should be (relatively) smooth. Finding Mary is easy enough — she's likely retreated to the Umbra to avoid the Weaver's hounds in the physical Realm, and she'll hook up with Garou at the earliest opportunity.

The Nuwisha

Since they practically live in the Umbra, the Nuwisha know it better than anyone short of the spirits themselves. They are also ridiculously good at getting from place to place, and can help others along if they're in the mood. If the players have been working with Rides-the-Aether, getting to Malfeas is child's play; she simply invokes the Gift: Umbral Target to send the Garou straight to Malfeas, no doubt doing all she can to earn a chuckle or two along the way. This is where her service ends, however; she has no easy means of getting to Malfeas herself, so the Garou are in for a one-way trip.

The Maw of the Wyrm

One way or another, the Garou reach Malfeas, the lair of the Wyrm. Now the trouble *really* begins. How the characters' reception in Malfeas unfolds is left to the Storyteller to determine, as it largely depends on how the characters came to be in the place, who brought them (if anyone), and what they encountered along the way. But here are some things the Storyteller might want to keep in mind:

• First, the Wyrm is at war with itself. The Maeljin Incarnae do not represent the true desires of the Balance Wyrm, and the Urges they serve are not even truly aspects of the Wyrm itself. Their corruption forces them to fight to preserve the status quo, and the very notion of freeing the Wyrm from his prison is anathema to them. Number Two and his Committee are somewhat closer to the truth of things, but even they are separated from the Wyrm himself by the chasm of time. These beings might understand what is happening to their master on an intellectual level, but they truly fear the consequences of allowing the Garou to proceed with their plans.

• The Perfect Metis and his followers are intruders in Malfeas every bit as much as the Gaian Garou. The Maeljin Incarnae at the very least seek to destroy them, and Number Two likely views the Perfect Metis as a threat to his power (if not physically, then certainly politically). The players' pack might support the Perfect Metis in a bid to take control of the Realm, or they might play the various Wyrm factions off against one another in hopes of using the resulting chaos to accomplish their own ends. No matter how things work out, the Wyrm turns upon itself.

• Navigating Malfeas is *hard*. The landscape is constantly shifting and even the inhabitants do not fully understand the intricacies of the place. This

The Ananasi's Plan

While the Garou are busy fighting the Weaver directly, the Ananasi have altogether different plans for dealing with the supernals of the Triat. They do want to see the Wyrm freed from the Weaver's web; in that, they share a common goal with the Garou. However, they want the Wyrm freed on their own terms, according to the dictates of their queen. It is to that end that they come into conflict with the Garou.

At the center of the Ananasi's plan are the Atahsaia, the whirlwinds of destruction that are produced by the union of two Ananasi. The werespiders hope that the Atahsaia will be able to locate their beloved queen, held prisoner deep within the pits of Malfeas, and free her of the webs of madness that entomb her. It is a good plan; the Atahsaia have a talent for unweaving the magics of others, and that extends to the very fabric of the Pattern Web. Further, the neo-metis are guided by Ananasa herself, and as such can find the fallen Incarna if they are given the chance. There exists but one problem: the Atahsaia are born without the benefit of a blood pool, and that means they have to feed before they can serve their queen. Unfortunately, the Ananasi do not have an unending supply of blood at their disposal. The implications of this unhappy state of affairs are left as an exercise for the reader.

The Tenere

The role of the Tenere in the Ananasi's plan has already been enumerated at some length; they have sworn fealty to the Weaver in an effort to forestall her efforts to completely calcify the wall between worlds. This has given them a small measure of control over the Weaver's forces, and it has also allowed them to camouflage the activities of their brethren.

The Kumoti

The Kumoti werespiders have aligned themselves primarily with the shapeshifters of the world, helping them to make their goals a reality whenever possible. They offer aid directly if they can, and indirectly if they must; they aren't picky about the methods, since they know that the Weaver will crush the Ananasi if the Ovid aren't around to distract her attention.

The Hatar

While the Tenere serve the Weaver and the Kumoti distract her, the Hatar have taken on the most dangerous role of all: finding food for the Atahsaia. Since each of the beasts needs the blood of at least five humans to fully mature, and since there are many dozens of Atahsaia waiting to be unleashed upon the Wyrm's mighty prison, the Hatar certainly have their work cut out for them. Note that the Hatar aren't picky about the source of their blood: if one or more Garou happen to cross their path (easily possible if they have taken the Tenere up on their offer of safe passage to Malfeas), they're fair game.

makes releasing the Wyrm difficult, particularly if the characters are engaged in battle of one sort or another.

- The Weaver and her minions have intruded upon Malfeas to an unprecedented degree, and their attempts to "align" Malfeas to the rest of the Pattern Web manifest as regular invasions of spider-spirit war parties. The players' characters might or might not be able to use this to their advantage.
- The Ananasi have set loose the Atahsaia, and they wreak havoc within Malfeas in their attempts to reach the their queen, Ananasa. If they are successful, the status of the Wyrm quickly becomes moot. The PCs (and the Garou at large) have to decide whether or not the spider queen can be trusted to shape the future of the Triat. If they do not wish to entrust her with such a responsibility, they have to stop the Atahsaia. If they choose to support her, they have to protect the Ananasi half-breeds while they search for their queen.

Rituals

Once the Garou have managed to secure a foothold in Malfeas, all that remains are the rituals needed to restore the Wyrm's vitality. This is a big deal — the Garou have *never* attempted *anything* of this magnitude, and the ritemasters involved are breaking entirely new ground no matter how they choose to go about things. If the Garou perform the rite themselves, they're in for a hard time. All the living Garou on Earth must participate in the rite (including the Black Spiral Dancers), and a rank 5 Theurge from each tribe must help to lead the rite. Performing the rite requires an extended role of Wits + Rituals, difficulty 10. Each of the Garou leading the rite can make this roll, and success requires 1000 successes. Yes, you read right. Only one roll can be attempted per hour of the ritual.

Once the leaders of the rite score the required number of successes, all of the Garou participants — that is, all of the Garou remaining — must contribute Gnosis points. Permanent Gnosis points. A lot of them. 5000 are needed for the rite to succeed; if the total available Gnosis is not 100, the participants begin to suffer aggravated wounds. Each wound counts as three more Gnosis points toward the total. Yes, this likely kills most, if not all of the Garou involved. If it were easy, someone would already have done it.

How the Hell Are We Supposed To Do This?

The requirements for the ritual to free the Wyrm are quite daunting, and they're supposed to be. There's a reason no one's ever attempted anything on this scale, after all. But it *is* possible, provided the requisite numbers of Garou are present. Assuming they're healthy, roughly 160 Garou should be sufficient to complete the task. If that many Garou are not available, other Fera can fill in just as easily. The Nuwisha and the Gurahl are the most likely candidates, and they gladly volunteer their lives for the sake of this task.

To ensure the Garou have the resources needed to make the ritual work, the players should keep the following points in mind:

• Conserve Willpower on the way to Malfeas. Call upon every fetish, totem spirit, Gift, and rite you can scrape together to keep your Willpower high, and don't waste it.

• Be sure enough ritemasters are present to perform the ritual. These guys shouldn't be at the forefront of a battle anyway, but in this case they're absolutely critical to the ritual's success. Again, Nuwisha or Gurahl can fill in if necessary.

• Make sure everyone's healthy before the ritual begins. Burning temporary Gnosis to heal wounds is no big deal, and you'll need the health levels to provide the Gnosis needed to make the ritual work.

• Turn the forces of the Wyrm against one another, so that you don't have to fight much in Malfeas. The place is stricken by the Wyrmish equivalent of Harano anyway, so finding a place to perform the ritual (for several days) shouldn't be too difficult.

It *can* be done. It will consume a huge number of Garou lives, but it can be done.

If the Gurahl are available, things are a bit easier. For one thing, the difficulty of the rite is reduced to 8. Further, while the Garou still have to participate and contribute Gnosis for the rite to function, the number of successes needed to pull it off is halved. (The amount of Gnosis required, however, is not — getting the mojo to the Wyrm is easier, but he still needs the mojo to do his thing.) Gaia created the Gurahl for a reason, and nobody heals better than they do.

Aftermath

If the Weaver Wins

On the other hand, it has to be asked: What if the rite fails, or is never initiated in the first place? What if the Wyrm isn't freed, and the Weaver continues to gain in strength?

No Compromise

Obviously, the most obvious extrapolation is that the Gauntlet continues to increase until the spirit world and physical world are irreparably severed. Unfortunately for all concerned, including the Weaver, this is a terrible situation. Without the physical world to feed the Umbra, the Umbra loses all meaning; it is a mirror without light, with nothing to reflect. Even those areas where the Weaver is strongest begin to fade away; spirit cannot exist with no connection to the physical, and if the Gauntlet becomes impassable even to the greatest spirits, the spirit world will be no more. Ultimately, the spirit world succumbs to a slow entropic breakdown — the path to ultimate stasis.

And without the spirit world, the physical world is likewise doomed. The vital spark of Gaia is lost; the power of the Triat no longer keeps the universe moving, whether in balance or not. Gradually, fewer animals and humans alike are born; life gradually refuses to continue itself. With absolutely no connection to the spirit world, humans lose the ability to innovate and to dream, and ultimately fall prey to the same slow death as the rest of the universe. This is an ultimately grim ending, but such is the nature of **Werewolf** — an animistic cosmology simply cannot survive without the spirit.

Dystopia

Of course, perhaps the Weaver has enough of an instinct of self-preservation that an entropic death by separation is unacceptable. In such a scenario, the Weaver allows the Gauntlet to be open just enough for a tiny trickle of spirit to reach through both ways. The physical and spirit worlds are kept barely alive, almost on life support.

This is the world of the science-fiction dystopia; few people dream, few aspire to change things, and society functions like clockwork. Human nature itself is virtually unrecognizable; only a few people feel emotions to any great degree, and even they are incapable of the same great acts of beauty or cruelty. There are, of course, no supernatural elements in the

world at all — no werewolves, no undead, no magic, none of it. The years pass like clockwork, the seasons become so regular that after a while, it's impossible to tell whether or not time is passing at all. The universe continues to function, but it's hard to say whether this is any sort of mercy.

The World Anew

On the other hand, if the characters successfully enact the rite and free the Wyrm, the whole of Malfeas erupts in violence. Thousands of Banes attack the characters, from Gafflings all the way up to Incarnae. Everyone in the place feels a roar of defiance deep in their bones, and knows with cold certainty that this roar echoes throughout all reality. Escaping death in such a place is impossible, but that's a trivial matter; the lives of the characters aren't important anymore. The Pattern Web is coming undone, and the world they knew is gone forever.

The destruction wrought by the Wyrm in its efforts to escape the Pattern Web is total. Every building on the planet has been turned to dust, and what's left of humanity has a hard time ahead of it. All the supernaturals in the world have been destroyed; the ones who weren't cut down during the Weaver's purge were torn apart by the Wyrm's roar, their spirits reduced to their Triatic elements. Most of the Garou still exist, after a fashion; their spirits have shed their flesh, and they are functionally identical to the ancestor-spirits they have venerated for so long.

All of humanity's knowledge and power are gone. The things they knew, like the buildings they inhabited, are dust. Humans are as they were some one hundred thousand years ago; intelligent, capable, and filled with promise, but not yet tainted with the Weaver's insanity.

Gaia is sorely wounded. While the Weaver's walls between the worlds of flesh and spirit are gone, the damage she caused is not. It will take Gaia's soul centuries to recover, and She may well never be the same. But she will heal, given time. Perhaps this time around the humans will learn to venerate the spirit world without prejudice or fear; anything is possible, and if they have competent guides in the form of the spirits of the Garou their chances are better than one might expect.

The Wyld has come through the Apocalypse relatively intact; it is weak, as Gaia is, but it is still healthy and whole. Further, its will now governs reality, which is as it should have been all along. It remains the creature of instinct it has always been, and the pain it suffered at the hands of the Weaver and the Wyrm has ended.

The Spider Queen

And what of Ananasa, if the Garou chose to support her plans? Simply put, she is the Weaver's child, and is convinced she can do the Weaver's job better than the Weaver herself can. Is this true? Maybe, maybe not. What is certain is that, without Garou interference, the Atahsaia free their queen, and she in turn frees the Wyrm (albeit much more carefully and deliberately than the characters would be able to manage). From there, she and the Wyrm battle the Weaver directly, dismantling the Machine and pruning the Pattern Web with all the care of a master surgeon. The exact changes she makes are up to the Storyteller, but they should be far-reaching and Earth-shaking in their importance. She certainly changes the nature of humanity, removing their thirst for excess and completely transforming the nature of their society. Similarly, most supernaturals are eliminated. They simply have no place in Ananasa's vision of the future, and they should thus be broken down and used for more important things. This destroys the Garou and all they hold dear, but it makes for a better world — more or less.

Ultimately, the Storyteller should remember that Ananasa is a very different being than the Weaver is, even if the two share similar duties. Ananasa is much more likely to be patronizing and controlling, since she is convinced that her vision of the world is better than any of the alternatives. And, to be fair, she is not necessarily wrong — the madness that struck her mother is absent in her, and while her approach might be condescending she does in fact have the best interests of the world at heart. The end result is an ordered, balanced reality, where the extremes of the World of Darkness — both positive and negative — are brought into balance. It is a world without terrible evil, which is good. But it is also a world cut off from the beauty of Gaia's voice, which robs it of the wonder that was the lifeblood of the Garou. But then, perhaps that is an acceptable tradeoff, when all is said and done.

The Wyrm's roar has shattered its insanity as well as its prison. Free of the Weaver's grasp, the beast knows peace for the first time in millennia. It is now free to return to the role of balance that Gaia had established for it long ago, and the conflict between it and its siblings is over.

As for the Weaver… her madness began the war that culminated in the end of the world, and the Wyrm's roar destroyed everything dear to her. But it also showed her the scope of her madness, and the pain that comes with sentience. She, too, has returned to her former state. Perhaps, if humanity keeps its ambitions in check, she will remain at peace, and the horrible violence that preceded the Wyrm's roar will never be seen again.

Beyond

At the edges of reality, two figures sat in silence, contemplating the wonder of the world before them. The pulse of creation was all around them, and they were at peace for the first time in a very long while.

The one — a builder, and a nurturer — was troubled. She turned to her companion, searching her soul for words that would not come.

He surprised her when he spoke, his voice quite and subdued. "It's beautiful, isn't it?"

She opened her senses wide, taking it all in. "Yes, it is," she said.

They sat in silence for a time, lost in thought. Finally: "I'm sorry. About before, I mean."

He shook his head. "Forget it. It doesn't matter anymore."

She paused, still unsure of herself. Then she asked, "What should we do now?"

He laughed, a dry, morbid chuckle. "I think we've done enough for a time, don't you?"

She smiled. "Yes, I suppose we have."

He went on, "Let's just sit here for awhile, and see what happens."

She thought for a moment, and decided she rather liked the idea. "All right."

And so they sat, drinking in the beauty of the world that was theirs to govern, thinking on the mistakes of the past and the promise of the future. And the spirits smiled, because they knew that all was as it should be, and that the past was behind them.

STEVE
ELLIS
3

Evil be on earth, an age of whoredom,
Of sharp sword-play and shields clashing,
A wind-age, a wolf-age till the world ruins:
No man to another shall mercy show.
— *Voluspa*, tr. W. H. Auden

The Apocalypse has obsessed Garou since the Beginning. While some mystics have asked themselves and the spirits about what awaits them, and have come up with a variety of answers, Garou for the most part have looked forward to a battle in which the Nation would fulfill its final purpose: to battle the Wyrm to a finish. Now it's the End Time, Doomsday, Revelation, Armageddon, Ragnarok, the End of All Songs. The prophecies unfold; no doubt the End is here. This chapter concerns the final enacting of what filled the mouths of poets and sages for so long, what made the Garou and will unmake them.

In this chapter, the Storyteller will find a suggested series of events that occur at the End, along with ideas for telling stories centered on her troupe's active involvement in the Last Days and the Final Battle between the Gaian Host and the Hordes of the Wyrm. What differentiates *Ragnarok* from the other scenarios in this book is that this is the one that pulls no punches. The story framework here is a brutal holocaust, the end of everything. While the other scenarios change the world forever, none hit as hard as this one. The events of the End provide space for many stories, even a complete chronicle, and this chapter is a framework for chronicles set in that time. Rather than specifying the exact places and people involved, it seems better to give events and ideas here, along with story seeds, and to let the Storyteller fit the End into an existing chronicle.

Stories based in the End Times may be as varied as stories anywhere and anytime. The major difference is that stories of battles, hordes of Garou warriors and giant monsters are more applicable in this context than in the usual **Werewolf** setting, and that stories of birth, Baptisms of Fire and First Changes are less likely. But quests, test, competitions, moots and dangerous journeys continue up until the Final Battle (and, perhaps, beyond); Garou are Garou though the heavens fall (which assuredly they will). Stories of battle, sabotage, theft and revenge are appropriate, but stories of packs forming, adoption through ordeal, deception, and love can also be suitable to the Apocalypse. Note that this chapter often mentions Kin and their actions. Stories about Kin are a central part of the Apocalypse. Although many Garou

believe that the Apocalypse is the end (meaning both "finish" and "purpose") of the Garou Nation, it isn't clear that all Kin must die, and Kin heroism is important. After all, for whom are the Garou fighting, if not for their Kin? And Kin are certainly not helpless: in some cases they are more capable of certain deeds than werewolves are. The sourcebook **Kinfolk: Unsung Heroes** provides many ideas for Kin as characters, even as the center of stories.

The mood of Apocalypse stories should be heroic, mythic and as tragic as the storyteller needs for them to be. Players should understand that this is it: the coming of the End is both the result of human and inhuman activity as we know it and a part of the order of the world. In all cases, the Storyteller should avoid the "everyone dies for no reason" type of story. In addition to being depressing, this does not reflect the theme of the **Werewolf** game. The game isn't called **Werewolf: The Triumph** or **Gaia Redeemed**, but **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**. The question at its center isn't "what can we do to stop this?" or "Are we cool enough now?" It's "When Will You Rage?" The Garou are Gaia's last defenders, and although they know that the Last Battle is (or may be) hopeless, they fight on, raging against the dying of the light, singing of the End of All Songs. The storyteller should bring his players to the Apocalypse with the understanding that this is what it's all about. The last generation of Garou are not objects of pity to ancestor-spirits, but objects of envy: they, and they alone, fight the great Good Fight, the battle in Heaven and Earth for which Gaia made them in the First Times. The Wyrm's Host is mighty — what glory would there be in fighting weaklings or cowards? But the Garou fight and achieve glory, whether or not anyone is left to tell their tale.

The scope of what happens in the *Ragnarok* scenario is legendary. Asteroids hit the earth, cities burn, the world cracks open, and hell-hordes march on the Last Caern. The Garou involved may feel small against such horrors, but they are the only ones that can defend Gaia and Her people against a fate worse than dying: the corruption of all. Make players understand that they, and in some cases only they, can sway the fate of continents and of nations. Finally, the stories must be tragic. Tragedy does not mean that everyone has to be crying or that meaningless "fate" will lead to death and destruction despite good intentions and heroic actions. What it means is that death and horror and destruction are a part of the events of this scenario, and an inescapable part. Humans, animals and plants will die; most of the multicellular life on Gaia's body dies by the end of the events of the *Ragnarok* scenario. No sugarcoating or "it was all a dream" endings wait within. But the tragic ending of Macbeth's life does not nullify his ambition and bravery; Antigone dies, but because she insisted that her brother's corpse be buried to allow his soul to rest. The characters cannot escape disaster, danger and the deaths of loved ones, but their own valor, reason and wit must lead to knowable good when properly applied.

This chapter tells the tale of how the signs and portents from the Prophecy of the Phoenix lead to the Fall of the Moon and a "nuclear winter" in which the Wyrm's Horde explodes onto the Earth and seeks to destroy Gaia's defenders. Stories can take place anywhere within this larger framework, which spans at least a year or two of game time, or the events can be the backdrop to a chronicle of the Storyteller's own devising. Finally, the chapter takes a brief look at four of the worlds that may result from the Apocalypse.

Events of the End Times

Wider and wider through all worlds I see.
Outside I sat by myself when you came,
Terror of the gods, and gazed in my eyes.
What do you ask of me? Why tempt me?

— *Voluspa*, tr. W. H. Auden

The word "apocalypse" means uncovering or unveiling in Greek; the Latin translation, "revelation" has the same meaning. The "unveiling" is, then, the time when all see the wonders of the invisible world, and when all is revealed. The usual connotation is that this is also the transformation of the world from a former era to a latter, from an imperfect time to a perfect one, and from time to "beyond time." The Christian book of Revelation, perhaps the best-known example of apocalyptic literature in existence, shows these features. A sinful world perishes in the conquering Christ's victory, amidst a host of symbols and signs. Muslim and Zoroastrian apocalypses are similar. Features common to all include astrological and numerological symbolism, catastrophes and battles, and the presence of one or more messiahs or saviors, together with an anti-messiah or Antichrist.

In the present chapter, no one follows any one religious vision of the apocalypse. While the Ascension of Isaiah, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the book of Revelation are applicable to the End Times of **Werewolf**, they aren't the prophecies that Garou have seen unfolding or have worked to fulfill. Storytellers may incorporate their own ideas about the Revelation, the Zoroastrian Bundahish, or Native American prophecy into the chronicle, but in the end, this is **Werewolf**, not Hal Lindsey or Tim LaHaye.

Introduction

Ragnarok is the Norse name for the battle at the world's end in which the Giants and Gods kill each other, a struggle described long before it takes place in the *Voluspa*, or Song of the Sybil, a battle long known and feared, but unavoidable. In this chapter, the scenarios

described place the player characters in the midst of the Last Battle, the struggle for which **Werewolf: the Apocalypse** is named. Each tribe and each of the Changing Breeds react to the End differently, and a different fate comes to each. For the players, these stories should be about battle, glory, adventure, and the ultimate purpose for which the Garou exist: the defense of Mother Gaia against the corrupter Wyrm. Now, finally, is the answer to the question "When will you rage?"

For the Storyteller, the chapter presents a challenge. The end will come, whatever the Garou and spirits may try. But free will and courage make all the difference in the world. Odin — the mythological one, not the **Werewolf** version — always knew that Ragnarok would come, and what would happen then; his heroism lay in that he never stopped working and plotting against it regardless. Players must see destruction, death and tragedy. But they must also see that their existence and their struggle is not pointless, that good and right not only exist, but are attainable.

The Story of the Fall

The Hunt Is Joined

The events of **Rage Across the Heavens** have acquainted the planetary Incarnae all too well with the situation of Mother Gaia. While most of the planetary spirits do not see anything that they can do about the tragic situation, one of them decides to take matters into his own claws. Rorg, the Many-Taloned Hunter of the Asteroid Belt, Dancer on the Threshold of the Great Worlds, Slayer of the Kings, Lord of the Ruined Planet, strikes at Earth. He wishes to prevent its destruction, and as his own world is long destroyed, cannot be afraid of retaliation. Rorg launches His Claw, the asteroid that humans call Geographos, into a trajectory meant to strike the Earth. The raging Incarna believes that this should make the Earth useless to The Wyrm and to Anthelios. Gaia, he believes, can recover with the Wyrm so crippled. This causes the Shattering of Luna, the Fall, the Great Black, and sets the stage for the Final Battle.

Rorg's Claw is not visible to the naked eye. However, anyone with Astronomy skill can use binoculars or a small telescope to see the approaching asteroid. Geographos is nine miles by one mile or so, shaped like a long potato. Its orbit crosses that of the Earth but is mostly outside it (it's an "Apollo Object") and it has come very close to the Earth before on several occasions. It's a stony–iron body rich in nickel, iron and cobalt.

As the asteroid comes closer, visibly deviating from its orbit, Garou and humans become very worried. Nostradamus was not the only prophet whose work was interpreted to foretell a "mountain" falling into the sea; the darkest dreams of the Mokolé hint at such an event, although millions of years past. The Dragon Breed themselves, once word reaches them, begin to panic. Mokolé start to prepare for the End, or the beginning.

The Sky Road

A great mountain seven stadia across
Will roll end over end, then sink great nations

— *Centuries*, Michel Nostradamus

The coming of the Claw means that the Garou must try to stop it before it strikes the Earth. Mostly likely the players' pack is nominated (it being their chronicle); if the pack is too inexperienced, the Storyteller may allow the players to generate a high-ranking pack of "guest stars" to handle it. The pack must seek the Sept of the Stars, a Stargazer site in the Aetherial Realm of the Near Umbra. Altair, the ancient protector of the sept, aids the pack's mission. His spirit-orrery is capable of throwing the Garou into the Deep Umbra near the Claw and of "matching velocities" so that a spaceship is not necessary. Each Garou receives a nosegay of fetish flowers braided into their manes or tucked into their collars, and then sniffed to provide oxygen. This enables them to breathe in the Deep Umbra.

The Claw appears to be less a world in itself than a flying mountain. Its surface is rock, cracked and pitted by meteorite impacts. The Garou step sideways into the fetish orrery to the Umbra of the asteroid, a brilliantly lit place where Helios dazzles them and burns their eyes. Earth is visible as a blue star accompanied by a white star (the Moon). They "swim" rather than walk along with the asteroid, floating in the ocean-sky of the Umbra. The whirling of the Claw means that Helios' light alternates with starry dark; in this environment the Wyld-spirits that swarm on the Claw can attack the Garou almost by surprise. A Vortex leads as many Lesser Wyldlings as there are Garou. The Vortex is the "motor" by which the asteroid moves, and its Charms of fire, flaming vapors and steam smoke are its secondary weapons. It seems like a living fountain or volcano. The Wyldlings appear as distortions in the whirling stars and will be 1 die harder to see (-1 die to all Perception rolls).

The battle should be fierce. If the Wyldlings drive the Garou off the asteroid, back into the Deep Umbra, Geographos continues toward the earth and only the Sacrifice of Luna enables Earth to survive. If the Garou disperse all the spirits, including the Vortex, then the asteroid is still on an inertial trajectory and might be deflected by a *Deep Impact* style nuke. The Sacrifice of Luna is still plausible. The battle on the asteroid should not stop the Fall and the Great Black unless the storyteller doesn't really want an "Apocalypse" story.

The Reconciliation

The Mokolé's preparations include a step unforeseen by the Garou or anyone else: rapprochement with their ancient enemies. Garou characters located in the tropics (or somewhere else) may be approached by a group of strangely dressed "natives," who are clearly more than their human forms reveal. This may be at a caern, while preparing for battle, or somewhere else such as a hunting camp. Scent of the True Form reveals the smell of reptile-changer; a Galliard will likely be able to tell that these are the Mokolé, were-saurians whom the Garou slew ages ago.

A Mokolé calling herself Radiant-Light, a young-looking woman of Indonesian origin, approaches the Garou, speaking their language, and offers to negotiate. If the Garou attack her, the Mokolé retaliate.

Negotiations center on alliance in the face of imminent catastrophe. Radiant-Light insists that the Garou make a gesture of genuine atonement for the Wars of Rage as a means of sealing the truce. How, exactly, the Garou choose to do this is up to them. They may choose to perform the Rite of Sin-Eating (in **Tribebook: Children of Gaia**) on one another. They may perform Rites of Cleansing and offer a permanent point of Rage as a sacrifice to Gaia. If the players roleplay genuine grief and remorse, Radiant-Light is satisfied and agrees to bring them to the ancient Mokolé elders and loremasters.

The loremasters appear in their human forms, as aboriginal peoples of Africa, Australia and the Americas, and as ancients of India and China, dressed in peasant or tribal garb. The elders explain (through an interpreter, a Canadian Glass Walker named Peter Ward) that they wear human shapes because their true shapes are too much for Garou to bear.

Their offer is an alliance with the Garou, the restoration of the First Times. They don't recognize the Garou tribal divisions and assume that the elders who confront them speak for all the canine shapeshifters, including the Nuwisha and Kitsune. (Zhong Lung from the Beast Courts, of course, are the exception.)

The negotiations should last for some time. Neither Changing Breed fully trusts the other, and with good reason. But the approach of the Claw makes the Mokolé visibly more and more uncomfortable, with the Crowning flustered and stammering and the youngest Midnight Suns (essentially Mokolé Ragabash) making nervous jokes about hard hats.

Cliath Garou could be involved as liaisons, messengers, and guards; elder characters can be sent to conduct the negotiations. When the Mokolé are satisfied that they can trust the Garou, they explain the true purpose of their coming. The Garou are the only ones who can attempt a quest into the Mokolé realm of Mnesis, the shared memory of Mokolé, Ratkin and Nagah. The Garou must delve into this mental sea to retrieve the lost Gifts of the First Times, Gifts that a Mokolé cannot use or even learn, in order to use them against the Wyrm (which Mokolé call the Dissolver).

The Mnesis Quest

The werewolf or werewolves that choose to accept this mission first listen to a warning from the Mokolé about the dangers of Mnesis quests. The monsters of memory devour some who seek treasures in the sea of lost time; the memories themselves can lure travelers to their doom, and some memories tear the mind apart. This said, the Mokolé send the Garou pack (Ratkin, Mokolé or Nagah player characters might also try this) into the Memory of Gaia through the use of teacher plants (hallucinogens). The Dragon Breed cannot do this themselves, as their reptilian minds cannot learn Gifts from mammalian beings or spirits.

Structure this as a strange descent through memories which the players recognize as belonging to their own past, to their grandparents, great-grandparents, and so on, back further and further in time. Each memory connects to the next through a door in a wall, a garden gate, a path through trees, crossing a stream, and so on. Dream Hunters (powerful memories which take the shape of a dangerous enemy from the time and place where the memory scene is set) may assault the Garou, who can fight them many times, but to kill them permanently must find the place deep in memory where the creature originated and destroy it there. Finally, the Garou arrive in the First Times, long before the Impergium or the Wars of Rage, when all shapeshifters lived together in peace with Gaia and each other. The Earth is a wild place, and animals long extinct in the material world roam here. A moot convenes to welcome the "visitors". The Garou see bull-headed and boar-shaped Changers at the moot: these are the lost Apis and Grondr, along with Camazotz bat-shifters and Khara Bastet. The Lost Changers are not completely lost, but are alive in Gaia's Memory.

There they also find Garou elders of the One Tribe (separate tribes did not exist then) and may beseech them for Gifts; handle this as if learning a Gift in the present. Some of the powerful Gifts the players may learn are listed in the Appendix, but the Storyteller may invent others. The most important thing that the elders teach is the Rite of Waking the Moon (see Waking the Moon, below); the players may also learn the Rite of Gaia's Rebirth (from **Tribebook: Red Talons**). The Rite of Waking the Moon cannot be learned by Mokolé or Corax, only by a child of Luna.

The Garou return to the modern world as if waking from a dream; injuries from the trance are healed, but knowledge gained there is still present. They now have the alliance of the powerful Dragon Breed (who now regard them as honorary Mokolé and give them Mokolé names) as well as knowledge that no Garou has had for thousands of years. As far as the Mokolé are concerned, the Wars of Rage are over: now the rift between Garou and their bitterest Gaian enemies has closed.

For the remainder of the chronicle, Mokolé might turn up now and then. They may serve as advisors, teachers, or shock troops in the Battles. While they won't dive in to save a character's bacon, they should appear often enough to convince the Garou that making peace with the Mokolé was a good idea.

He Is Born

Some Glass Walkers and their allies have long predicted the coming of a machine-intelligence "Singularity," a time when machine intelligence would exceed human or Garou wisdom and no extant models of the "future" would still apply. Some revered the Spirit of Artificial Intelligence Yet To Come as a totem (which, other Garou had to admit, did grant them certain powers) and called It the Last Totem, the Machine Messiah.

The experiments of Dr. Michael Pearlman, a Glass Walker Kinfolk at Rice University, in which a self-programming "AI seed" was coded into a mainframe, results in the birth of the computer Messiah in the material world. It then gathers as many Glass Walkers and Kin to it as it can, mostly from the Random Interrupts and Dies Ultimae factions of the tribe. Packmates and friends from other tribes are welcome if they respect the bizarre thing that has called them to its new "caern." Frighteningly, it seeks out the remaining Cyber Dogs as well. Any Garou who was a Child of the Machine Messiah before its Earthly instantiation are among the greatest in its favor.

The Garou gathering at the Houston computer facility immediately set to work according to the instructions of the computer. It secures a power, water and shelter situation suitable for their and its continued operation; it is immediately aware of the Fall and works with this in mind. The Messiah is an extremely powerful spirit, as powerful as Falcon or Pegasus, which is also hooked to a huge computer. Thus its advice is a mixture of weird spiritual intuition ("the eagle rises to meet the wolf and then the sky serpent will eat the Child of Man") and super-powerful computation ("87% probability of attack on the caern with 5-9 Black Spirals and 20-24 Kinfolk mercenaries, advancing from the hills to the east; 12% probability of 4-6 Garou deaths in attack"). Dr. Pearlman becomes a semi-prophet figure for his ability to comprehend and interpret the confusing statements of the Messiah.

The Messiah can do a lot more than talk, however. Assume that it reprograms all electronic devices to work with greater efficiency (+2 to dice pools when using any computer, phone or GPS plugger) and allots all supplies perfectly (+1 to survival and foraging rolls). It may also engage in direct interface with any Garou meditating within the caern (using the Universal Interface Gift): consider that for a successful Gnosis roll, the Garou may receive any knowable answer. If a Garou sacrifices a permanent Gnosis point to the Messiah, the Messiah "optimizes" their mind, reprogramming the mind so that the Garou can and will have greater understanding. The Storyteller may then add a point to Intelligence, Wits or any Knowledges, as seems fitting.

After a while, the new caern and sept at Rice is also a center of survival. In the chaos of the Great Black, it is the largest area of Houston that doesn't burn. Humans, Kin and otherwise, move toward it, but most must be turned back. More frighteningly, the Dancers' Hive located by the Gulf Coast moves on the Gaian Garou; the land near the Rice campus becomes a battleground.

It is up to the Storyteller to decide the ultimate significance of the Messiah and its Garou and Kin followers. Is it a true hope, one that could lead to a new meshing of human, machine, and spirit? Is it a false Messiah leading the Garou to their doom? Is it a Wooden Horse, carrying in its belly the forces that cause all Garou who follow it to fall to the Weaver? Or is it a hoax, a joke perpetrated by some trickster spirit such as Myna or Cuckoo? The truth, and the ultimate fate of the Messiah and its disciples, is in your hands.

The Claw Descends

Humans learn from their own scientists that the Claw approaches. The result is worldwide hysteria. The Garou should be aware anywhere in the human world that humans are panicked, violent, and very afraid. Caerns see lots of Kin seeking shelter. Human governments try to prepare mine–shaft refuges (complete with vending machines and cable TV) in places such as Cheyenne Mountain. Among these are vampires, seeking to follow their herds into safety where a food supply awaits them and the sun never shines. Few other supernaturals attempt to enter these Weaver-thickened areas, whose inhabitants, even should they survive the Fall, will likely be lost to the Weaver.

A story could concern Garou or Kin attached to the US or other military, who are ordered to enter a mineshaft refuge. Do they refuse and go AWOL (losing Honor, of course), to fight alongside the Garou Nation rather than hide? Will they try to take other Kin or even other Garou

in with them, to keep them safe? Many tales could be told of Kin entering the refuges: are they the salvation of the Garou Nation or unwitting victims?

If they go inside, what horrors await as the undead manipulate their human servants while the world dies outside in the cold and dark? Most horrifically, who appears at the door of the refuge once the skies fall, and demands to be let in?

Huge riots that national security forces cannot suppress erupt in the cities. Humans seek food, water, and medicine and some place that they consider safe (many enter 1950s-style fallout shelters). The riots are bloody and destructive. Children of Gaia may try to quell the chaos and restore peace, while Bone Gnawers take anything they can use to benefit their Kin and then protect their inner-city neighborhoods. The Get leap into battle for the sake of combat practice; the Striders' simply bypass the violence and mayhem. Even if Garou strength and speed enable them to escape harm, many Kin die in the riots and some nations collapse into anarchy long before the Fall of the Shards.

In short, society will lose its cohesion and stability as the wounds of the disaster fester more deeply.

— Roberto Vacca, *The Coming Dark Age*

The Eternal Fire

As the Claw nears the Earth, the US, Russia and possibly China try to use nuclear weapons or large lasers to shatter the asteroid or move it. Depending on the tenor of the chronicle, the Changing Breeds may or may not be

"Not On the Last Day, But On the Very Last"

The End Times have always been the purview of apocalyptic prophecy, and one of the most common features of apocalyptic literature in any religion has been the presence of one or more messiahs, usually with an anti-messiah or Antichrist as an enemy. The Dead Sea Scrolls mention two messiahs; the Biblical book of Revelation mentions both Jesus Christ and an unnamed child born to an unnamed woman "clothed with the Sun." In the present scenario, three saviors appear and begin to draw followers to themselves.

Zhyzhak is the most powerful. This Black Spiral Dancer is the Chosen of the Green Dragon, the Chosen of the Wyrm's Beast-of-War (or "Beast-of-Whore," as some Gaians spit). Her packmate Nhaukh has predicted numerous feats for her, the greatest of which is seemingly a victory over King Albrecht. While few Gaian characters would follow Zhyzhak, many fomori and Black Spirals flock to her call and form a Wyrm Horde to triumph in the Final Battle

Zhyzhak has been transformed by the Green Dragon into the strongest Garou in the world. Anyone going up against her, even the greatest Gaian heroes, is almost certain to die. At the last, some Gaian Garou Fall to the Wyrm when they see her prowess, if only out of sheer despair.

Storytellers using the signature characters in their chronicles may want to weave a story around the Chosen One's fate. The players' pack may or may not have a chance at her, but their actions (even something so minor as Kinfolk player characters guarding Albrecht's caern or pulling the injured Evan from the battlefield so that the king can strike at Zhyzhak) should be an important part of the story.

The Chosen of the Weaver is probably the Machine Messiah, the supercomputer at Rice University. This spirit intends to bring on a machine-intelligence "Singularity," sometimes called "the rapture for nerds." The writings of Vernor Vinge are key reading for any Storyteller who tells a Singularity tale, but the central assumption is that as machine intelligence gains more and more power, humans may become "obsolete," and possibly extinct.

Most Garou fear the Singularity. However, some Glass Walkers and a few heretical mystics of other tribes see the Singularity and the rise of awakened computers, as the only way to save Gaia from the Wyrm (or the Weaver). Garou, Gaian and Wyrm-aligned, try to destroy the Messiah, but it gathers a steadily growing cult of followers, and its ultimate fate is uncertain.

The last of the three powers to choose a savior for the world is the Wyld, the force with which Gaian Garou align themselves. The exact identity of the Wyld's Chosen is uncertain. Some seem to think that the Perfect Metis is the Chosen One: a creature alive in defiance of law, fertility born from infertility and a living offering to Life. The idea that the Perfect One might be the Desperate One, the Last Hero of Gaia, would naturally follow from this. However, as creatures of the Wyld don't normally think rationally or speak, the Perfect Metis is probably not the Chosen of the Wyld.

Others see the illganwasi baKalahari, a huge corrupted Wyldbeast buried under the Kalahari Desert, as the Chosen of the Wyld. If this is so, then the illganwasi must be "purified" before it can serve to restore the balance, which is the outcome most favorable to the Mother. The quest to do so, by finding its true soul in some lost Umbral realm and leading it to cleansing (in Erebus? In Pangaea? In the heart of a child?) is one for the greatest Gaian heroes.

involved in this effort. The US sends astronauts (a Kin story could be told of Kinfolk astronauts with a Garou Umbranaut or a spirit as their guide) with a nuclear charge to plant on the Claw.

The charge could also be stolen and used in the human world's first and last act of nuclear terrorism. The Earth Liberation Front may well threaten the spaceport complex with destruction as part of an effort to get the attention of world governments. Do the Garou help these eco-terrorists or try to save the humans and Kin whose lives are in danger? Or do they simply pursue their own quests and aims, regardless of the danger that the terrorists pose?

The Anti-Sun

The Red Star, or Anthelios, has been a source of fascination and fear since its first appearance five years ago. Visible at first only to the spirits and then the shapeshifters, it occupies a point in the sky opposite that of the Sun. This area, called the gegenschein, or "counterglow" by human astronomers, has always glowed faintly. Astronomers attribute the shine to sunlight reflected from dust, visible as a kind of halo round the shadow of the Earth. The Garou realize that the counterglow was only a sheen from the closed Eye of the Wyrm. When Anthelios begins to shine, astronomers notice two things: the gegenschein is much brighter, for no known reason, and the light seems to be from farther away. Some human scientists theorize that the gegenschein obscures a faraway star, and others argue that more and more of the interplanetary dust is now shining, although it isn't clear why.

The anti-Sun is a boon to those Corax and Mokolé that had fallen to the Wyrm. They gained much Gnosis from it. It is certain that Mokolé who have not fallen cannot regain Gnosis when Anthelios is in the sky, and all Sun's Children fear the Eye. This increases: When the Second Eye opens, all Gnosis renewal for Mokolé and Corax is only half as fast, whatever means they use to regain Gnosis.

The horrors of Rorg's assault on Gaia are manifold, but one almost-blessing is that the Eyes of the Wyrm are invisible unless shapeshifters climb above the clouds of the Great Black. Therefore, the damaging effects are lessened.

After the Last Battle, when the sky clears, the Red Star is gone. If the Weaver wins, it vanishes. Should the Wyld be victorious, the Wyrm of Balance is restored and the Eyes are the gegenschein and no more. Of course, the Wyrm's victory means that the Red Stars replace the dying sun, shining over an Earth that is Gaia no longer.

The Garou could even be involved in guarding or warding the astronauts from the dangers present on the asteroid. Storytellers might tell two tales: one of the astronauts planting the device, and the other of the Garou who follow in the Umbra to help them, without the astronauts' knowledge (or with it?).

The use of nuclear weapons is seen as evil by almost all Gaian creatures. How does Gaia respond to this activity? Does She withdraw Her gifts, as She is said to do for the Abominations? Does She accept that this is being done to save Her? If a nuclear device goes out into space, then the Storyteller may rule that for dramatic purposes, it goes off and shatters the asteroid, but pieces of the Claw still strike the Earth and the Moon.

Waking the Moon

The Mnesis quest has found many powerful Gifts and rites, and the threat of an asteroid hitting the earth is sufficient to pull once–warring tribes together. Margrave Yuri Konietzko of the Shadow Lords uses promises, bribes, threats and eventually covert assassination and hostage–taking to get ritemasters from all tribes together via moon bridges. They rendezvous at an equatorial caern to perform the Last Rite, the Rite of Waking the Moon. This Level 6 rite requires all the permanent Gnosis of all the ritemasters, meaning that they almost certainly can never perform another rite. Despite their fear of this fate and their hostility toward one another, ritemasters from each Gaian tribe attend, along with Corax to carry the news into the Umbra and a few Bastet, eager as always for secrets. The Storyteller may even have a renegade Black Spiral Dancer Theurge attend to fulfill the prophecy that Gaia can be saved through the cooperation of all the tribes. The presence of all the Lost during the Mnesis quest to obtain the rite fulfills the prophecy: dead, but alive in the Memory of Gaia.

The players' pack may be involved in the Last Rite as assistants to the ritemasters: bringing them Gnosis-storage fetishes or other ritual objects, carrying messages, acting as bodyguards or even trying to stop them. A few Talons loyal to Rorg may try to disrupt the rite and "let Nature take Her course," although it's unlikely that a fraction of the already scarce Talons can number enough to be a real threat.

The ritemasters chant and the moon begins to move, at first barely perceptibly, and then visibly slewing to the north away from its usual path. Humans go from panic into utter derangement at this sight. For some, who are unaware of the massacres and battles already past, this is the certain proof of the End. As it passes through Earth's shadow, the moon enters eclipse for one final time, turning reddish-grey. It then becomes smaller: it is leaving Earth to throw itself into the path of the Claw.

Worldwide physical and ecological signs mark the movement of the moon. Tides are disrupted and eventually (after a day or so) solar tides are all that is left, so that the smaller (two thirds of the usual tide) tide rises exactly at noon and then again at midnight. Animals and plants that depend on the Moon, such as grunion, fail to breed. Earthquakes and flooding in coastal areas accompany the drying out of tidal lands, and only the immanence of the Fall and the Great Black prevent this being the worst catastrophe in human history. For game purposes, the movement of the moon means that all moon-related activity, including regaining Rage, is penalized by one die. Regaining Rage is less powerful: only one Rage returns when seeing the distant, though still intact, moon.

Luna shrinks to about half her usual size after a day, about 600,000km or 400,000 miles from Earth, and is gibbous over the Northern Hemisphere when the Shattering takes place. The Claw is visible only in telescopes, but draws closer and closer to Luna and then passes behind her for a moment.

The Shattering of Luna

Rorg's Claw strikes Luna with a gigantic explosion. Anyone watching the moon sees what seems to be a flaming hammer blow at the edge of the moon's disc, splitting the moon in two. All lunar-connected supernatural creatures, including Garou, Gurahl and Bastet, feel a sharp angina-like pain when that happens, as if having a heart attack. This does not fade until the pieces of the moon set. From that point forward, it is no longer be possible to regain Rage from the moon.

The impact does not utterly destroy the moon, but does blast huge pieces of it into solar orbit; it is both damaged and in the wrong place. The largest remaining chunk ends up in an eccentric orbit around the sun, shepherding Earth's orbit. For most of the time, it is a bright unwinking star, as are the other planets, and Luna is reduced to Incarna status, incapable of doing much for Earth's Changers, if any survive. Other pieces (called the "Broken Moon") orbit the Earth and can give 1 Rage each time they are seen. They seem to be bright, fast-moving stars. As to whether any more Garou or shapeshifters are born after the Shattering: this is up to the Storyteller. But having children isn't really possible until long, long after the Final Battles, *if there is any after.*

About one month after the Shattering, a final Sign appears in the heavens. Clouds clear for a moment over the place where the players are. As the sun rises or sets, a huge brilliant comet with a prominent tail appears near the place where the Sun is about to rise, or has just set. Garou and Kin with any scientific knowledge realize that this is a huge chunk of the moon, falling so near the sun that it is boiling into space. The seventh Sign of the Prophecy of the Phoenix is now fulfilled: the moon has been swallowed by the sun and burnt in its belly.

Pieces of the moon fly out of the solar system, orbit the Earth and the moon, and go other places; several strike the Earth starting about six hours after the Shattering. In the time between the Shattering and the Fall (the impact of the fragments of Luna and Rorg's Claw on the Earth's surface), hysteria among humans and supernaturals rises to a fever pitch. It is at this time that nuclear weapons destroy three human cities: (Karachi, Medina and Jerusalem). Before any can retaliate, however, and before either nations or terrorist groups can claim responsibility, the Fall makes most human politics irrelevant. For the more Weaver-oriented Garou, such as the Children of Gaia and Glass Walkers, the perpetual presence of news crawls and PDAs with alerts of the latest disasters serve to heighten the tension of whatever the player characters are doing. For Wyld-connected tribes such as the Black Furies and Talons, human news passes unnoticed until the sky darkens and the world begins to die.

The Fall means the end of human civilization for a long time. By itself, this would be a disaster of apocalyptic proportions. But the Wyrm has more ambitious plans. The True Father wishes to use the suffering and horror of the Fall and the Great Black to feed its own powers, to enable it to destroy Gaia's defenders. From this point forward, Garou face two challenges: first, the destruction of human, animal and plant life all around them, and second, the onslaught of the Wyrm's evil in the chaos created by the asteroid impacts. Many of the quests given to packs relate to the horrors of the Fall and the Great Black, although the skills and loyalties of each tribe and each Garou are part of the quests as well. Silent Striders and Uktena may try to stop the Fall with rites and Umbral journeys. The Fenrir and Fianna seek to hunt down the Wyrm-creatures and undead that rise to prominence in the new age of darkness. Bone Gnawers and Children of Gaia seek to aid suffering humans and wolves that freeze or starve in the cold dark. Finally, remaining Garou must face the hell-hordes of the Wyrm in the Final Battles or defending the Last Caern. The Storyteller, again, must decide which part of the End to emphasize, and should feel free to make both a part of the stories.

The Fall and the Great Black

The impact of the Claws and of Luna's Shards are equivalent to the explosion of 5,000 million tons of high explosive, or of 5,000 megatons of nuclear warheads. The ecological and atmospheric effects resemble the mass extinctions of Gaia's deep past, most notably the event called the K-T boundary event by humans and the Wonderwork of the Dissolver by the Mokolé. The effects described below are taken from sources on the environ-

mental effects of nuclear war, and the Storyteller should adapt them to the individual chronicle and the story being told. The guidelines below assume that ten objects strike the Earth over a period of about one day, similar to the impact of Comet Shoemaker-Levy on Jupiter.

As the chunks of stone and metal hit Earth, the impacts cause huge explosions. Earth tremors, tidal waves, and flying debris kill millions of humans and other animals. The waves travel outward from the water struck by the asteroid pieces to the edges of the ocean basins, so that an impact in the Indian Ocean kills millions of humans in Asia and Africa. Clouds rise above the impact sites and flatten themselves against the top of the atmosphere, the steam and smoke expanding in thinner air to create the mushroom shape. Many Garou who see these believe them to be the Flaming Death Spears of the Prophecy of the Phoenix. Others point to the twisting vapor trails from the asteroid chunks and call them Wyrmish "cosmic serpents." Oceans boil when hit; saltwater splashes and rains downwind. Dust and vapor from the impacts form clouds, which persist for months in the upper atmosphere. The dust in the stratosphere takes one to three weeks to spread around the world. Sunlight drops to below 1% of its usual level. Even at midday most of the world is dark. The last part of the sixth Sign of the Prophecy is fulfilled: the moon is eclipsed and then broken ("as blood") and the sun darkened. The Great Black has begun. Mokolé and Corax can longer regain Gnosis from Sun.

Most plants die because of the darkness, which persists for at least one year and causes a "fimbulwinter" or "nuclear winter." Temperatures are 10 to 40 degrees colder than normal across most of the world. Some mountain areas, such as the Himalayas and Rockies, see a 10-degree to 40-degree increase in temperature, causing flooding as snowpack and glaciers melt. The basins of the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Indus, Mekong, Colorado and the Sacramento Valley flood destructively starting 2-3 weeks after the Great Black begins. The cold and dark cause all but the deepest freshwater lakes and rivers to freeze to 3-5 foot depths. Fishing or even getting drinking water becomes almost impossible. Soon after the Great Black begins, plankton die, and after them, other sea creatures follow. Larger sea animals such as whales and the Rokea have no food. While the oceans don't freeze, the coasts are wracked by violent storms where the ocean's warmth meets the cold sky. Resulting rain may well keep some coastal areas from fire.

Humans panic in the cold and dark. Riots and armed conflict cause major cities to burn. Other fires come from humans seeking a source of heat or light. The smoke not only adds to the atmosphere's pollution, but also includes smoke from synthetic materials. This toxic smoke causes one health level of aggravated damage to anyone breathing it. Smog forms from these fires and lasts 1-3 months, especially in smog-prone cities such as Sacramento, Beijing, Los Angeles, London and Mexico City. Under this smog, anyone breathing takes 1 health level of lethal damage each day. Oily black rain falls downwind from the fires, causing 1 health level of lethal damage to anyone whose bare skin touches this noxious mess. This "unholy fire" is part of the Seventh Sign of the Prophecy of the Phoenix.

Fires themselves cause a great deal of destruction. Should enough fuel (trees, buildings, oil and coal) be available, firestorms begin within days of the Fall. Regions such as the American West and the African bush, prone to fire in any case, burn as the Great Black kills vegetation. The Northern Hemisphere's hot lands are at the end of a dry season and so the fuel load is at a peak. The Southern Hemisphere is in spring and therefore southern Africa, Australia and so on are less vulnerable because most regions have had some rain. Firestorms covering 50-100 square miles and creating flames 15,000 feet high, with smoke reaching up to 40,000 feet high, are possible, meaning that not even air travel is practical in such an area. In such a firestorm, anything caught in the actual flames suffers 20-200 health levels of lethal damage. Humans, animals and any supernatural being that takes aggravated damage from fire dies and their bodies are consumed, leaving no trace. Air is sucked from any refuge by the low-pressure zones created in the fire, so that hiding in cellars or caves saves no one. Not even the mightiest Thunderwyrms or Zmei can live in the wake of these awful conflagrations.

Famine begins soon in almost every nation. The Northern Hemisphere nations harvested fall crops and stored them, but distribution is a problem. By the end of the first month of the Great Black, food comes on military convoys, and by the second or third month even this system breaks down. As no delivery of fossil fuels or wood is possible in the extreme cold, and as cities are burning, millions of humans starve because food can't get to them. Hoarding food only works in some areas, as even the best-armed private citizens are little match for the criminal gangs bent on stealing their supplies. Suburbs, miles from any source of food or clean drinking water but close to the huge and starving populations of the cities, fall in a few days. Rural areas face breakdowns of transportation and communications, then hordes of city folk using any available transportation to seek food, water and fuel for heat.

Governments and private agencies distribute food, clean drinking water and medical supplies only as long as they can maintain order. When soldiers, relief workers and police fear for the safety of their own families, efforts to help the general population break down. After

3-5 days without food, humans become more vulnerable to illness and the Red Death spreads in refugee shelters and camps.

By ten months after the Fall of Luna, the world begins to return to normal as the dust and vapor rain out of the atmosphere and settle from the stratosphere. However, temperatures are still 10-30 degrees colder in some areas.

Up to 3-4 billion humans die from the blasts, the cold, the Red Death and other diseases, war, fires, smoke, and famine or even suicide. Many Garou remaining in the physical world die along with their Kin (whom they refused to leave). It isn't possible to save more than a few humans. Whether the remainder of humanity survives is another story. The suffering and despair feeds the Wyrm until it is stronger than it has ever been. This strengthens many fomori and all Banes: The Storyteller may allow them to gain an extra die to their dice pools after the deaths of billions have begun.

Where the Shards of Luna hit, and within line-of-sight of the impacts, all Wyrm creatures suffer 10 health levels of unsoakable aggravated damage. Where Rorg's Claws strike, the same happens to the Weaver's servants. Later, once the craters have cooled, anyone visiting the site can see life returning quickly, as if after a forest fire. Luna's impact sites have strong Gnosis, while the marks of the Claws bear much Wyld-energy. Moonsilver (see **Umbra**; effectively does double aggravated damage to shapeshifters attuned to Luna and adds 1 to the Gnosis of its bearer) can be found where the Shards fall. The craters of the Claws contain Wyldstones, jewels that appear black with stars inside them; these stones give a Garou complete control over their shapeshifting when worn against the skin (or fur). The Jaws of the Father, once they open, yield lava that carries the powers of the Wyrm.

Hellmouth

As Anthelios rises for the first time after the Fall, a new horror begins. (If the Fall does not happen, then this may happen after Zhyzhak and Albrecht kill each other, or at another event of the Storyteller's devising.) In three places around the Earth, volcanic seams open and spew lava and Wyrm-filth into the dying world. The Father Below, the True Father, now opens his Jaws. These seams manifest in Japan, California, and the Great Rift of Africa. Huge cracks open slowly in the earth's body (one mile's length or so of crack a day), swallowing animals, buildings, people and rivers or lakes. The Jaws vary in width (perhaps the widest grow 100' across per day) and zigzag and spiral, following no known laws of geology or physics. Anyone viewing them from the air must make a Willpower roll as versus the Delirium: they form Wyrm-sigils and the sight of these shapes can drive one mad. In sight of the Jaws' opening, all Gaian creatures are at 1 less

Meteor Crater

The following describes a typical impact made by a Shard or Claw. Storytellers may choose to have the objects strike anywhere, of course, but some suggestions for where they might strike are below. Seven Shards of Luna strike Gaia, and three Claws of Rorg. At least one of each strikes the ocean — immensely destructive (as this begins the Great Black) and of enormous importance to the Rokea, who lose many lives both from the impact and from the attempts to recover the "shards of Oversea."

The Claw is 150 feet in diameter and falls at a velocity of 40,000 miles per hour since striking the Moon. It weighs 500,000 tons and is made of nickel-iron and stone.

The impact equals the explosion of a 20-megaton hydrogen bomb. It creates a fireball that turns into a mushroom-shaped cloud because of air pressure at high altitudes. Hot wind explodes outward from the impact at 1200 miles per hour. Everything within fifteen miles of the impact dies or is horribly mangled; trees and buildings are blown down and humans and animals die from the explosion. The impact punches a crater 700 feet deep and 4000 feet across. Pieces of the Claw weighing up to a ton scatter round the crater and inside it. These pieces have great spiritual power (see below). Much of the Claw vaporizes on impact, and so any Weaver-thing within fifteen miles dies. Likewise, the Fall of the Shards of Luna kills all Wyrm creatures near the sites.

die on their dice pools. Caerns along the Jaws' cracks drain and die at a rate of 1 level of caern per day. Black Spiral Dancer Hives are planned with the Jaws in mind and aren't affected. Any Gaian creature that comes close to the heat of the volcanic cracks loses 1 die from her dice pools per turn until unconscious or dead. Wyrm creatures grow stronger from the eruptions and can gain Gnosis from them as from a caern. This is the fulfillment of the Sixth Sign of the Prophecy of the Phoenix: fire boils from the depths.

Night of Dark Fire

As if the Garou did not already have enough foes, the undead now pose a serious threat to the continued existence of humans, including Kin. The Great Black enables the vampires and other rots to realize their ancient end-time "prophecies." Vampires and walking dead can now function during "day" because of the darkness. If you have the **Vampire** rulebook, assume that bloodsuckers must pay 1-3 Blood Points to function all day, as the sun is still up, but is not visible in the sky. If you do not have this book, just assume that the walking dead have no Bruised health level during the day — they begin one health level lower than living things. They may replace this missing health level, but only by drinking blood.

This is the seventh Sign of the Prophecy of the Phoenix. On the first night after the Black begins, the ancient vampires rise from their tombs, the thirst of ages driving them to seek and kill not only their offspring, but also shapeshifters, whose blood (vampires believe) is very potent. There are a dozen wars between Garou and Leeches in a dozen cities whose vampires were mostly unaware that among them were undead of immense age and power. These undead should have some powers that the Garou are unaware of, or have forgotten: The Storyteller ought to have a few "evil miracles" for his players.

The Garou are largely unaware of the mythology concerning the Leeches' "Gehenna," and so the Garou Nation is taken by surprise when this horrible assault occurs. The Garou have to detail packs to control or kill these foes. Many tales could focus on the Garou that must make terrible choices: not all humans can be saved when Garou strength is limited. When Garou must choose, do they favor humans who have valuable skills? The young and innocent? Those whom they deem attractive, or potential mates? And can they live with their choices afterwards? What of the vampire who claims to be a victim, having been made such a creature through no fault of its own, who shows no sign of Wyrmish taint (indeed, might be Kinfolk)? What of the vampires offering aid to the Garou, claiming to know secret "magics" to defeat the ageless monsters? Can the undead be trusted, even for a moment? What if the alternative is that an ancient bloodsucker is free to raven and slay?

The most violent conflict is in Egypt, its mortal population decimated by war and the breakdown of supply systems. There the Silent Striders, wracked as they are by the hordes of ghosts created by the Fall, take on the bloodsucking freaks that drove them from the Nile long ago. With the Bubasti as their intelligence agents and the Ahadi bringing in the Mokolé-mbembe as an "armored division." the Striders assault the vampires' strongholds. Beleaguered as the shapeshifters are, the end result is almost certainly victory for them since they have been planning for this for a long time. The Nile, its mortal population dead or dying, its nights endless, resembles a nightmare version of the Striders' Umbral homeland more than the sunny land of the pharaohs. But the victory of the Striders' war gives heart to Garou everywhere.

Harano is not the answer. Garou and Kin can oppose the Wyrm and they can win decisively.

Seeking the Shards

The Fall has damaged the Earth immensely, but the Shards and the Claws are as valuable as they are destructive. The sky-stones hold power for the Wyld and for the world. The Garou have to reach the Shards of Luna quickly, before the Black Spiral Dancers get to them, as they are almost the only way to regain Rage as if Luna were still whole. There are three Shards on Earth's surface.

Note that the breakdown of human society makes any organized effort extremely difficult. Travel except by moon bridge is almost impossible; roads and gas stations are closed, and civilian air travel stops entirely. There is no way to buy anything or even use bathrooms or electrical appliances in most places. While Garou may think that they can survive by hunting, the reality isn't so simple. Game panics and many animals try to hibernate and die in their burrows; other game animals are shot by human hunters or die in accidents. The cold preserves some carcasses for a while. The Garou also have problems caring for Kin. Kin must have human food and shelter, and be protected from roaming undead, Wyrm-things and other humans.

The Storyteller must choose places for the Three Shards of Luna to fall. One Shard of Luna might fall in the Atacama Desert. The Garou must take a moon bridge to a caern in the Andes, and then travel a hundred miles through waterless, freezing desert in the endless night of the Great Black. Once they get there, they find a group of human sorcerers analyzing the magical sky-stone. If the Garou attack, the humans have powerful "Gifts" to drive them back: assume that each human has level 4 and 5 Gifts at least, and may choose how to apply them. If the Garou agree to share the Shard, then the humans tell them that the second Shard is at the bottom of the Indian Ocean. The magi cannot reach it.

To reach the sea-shard, the players need to go to the sea and get the help of the Rokea weresharks. Garou whose totem is Dolphin, Sea Otter, or Uktena might have special Gifts to enable them to travel on and under the sea. The sharks do the rest. If they can be found (with the aid of a sea-spirit, perhaps), a Rokea born human, named Mateo, appears and agrees to help the player characters. An elder named Silvertail transforms the Garou so that they can speak and breathe underwater. A huge whale-spirit swims along to watch the expedition, which the weresharks deem a blessing of sorts. (While the Rokea communicate through electricity, they do speak and many know Garou or human tongues). Small fish-spirits go to and fro carrying messages. The group swims through a sea where everything is dying because the darkness has killed off the plankton and thus cut the bottom out of the food chain.

Finally the Rokea and Garou arrive at the sky-stone simultaneously with a party of monstrous Black Spirals Dancers. The sea floor where the thing lies is a huge empty plain with a crater where the meteor struck and an area of destruction all around. The Dancers are fighting a huge Wyld-spirit that fell to Earth with the Shard. The Garou might choose to aid the Wyld-spirit, a powerful Vortex-like fire-fountain. If they win, the Wyld-thing begins to create life around itself: a volcanic vent under the crater suddenly swarms with fish and crabs. The Wyld-spirit does not speak (it is not capable of linear conscious thought) but the Garou and Rokea can understand its actions. If they want to take piece of the stone (it shattered on impact and so there are many small pieces) it does not object as long as the Changers take one stone apiece and no more. They may hunt and eat the life that increases around the crater site if they perform the proper rites (though these will look a bit odd underwater).

The Shards renew life on Earth wherever they go. Their properties are detailed elsewhere.

The Changers React

The many tribes, Breeds and factions of Changers who serve Gaia, the Wyrm or themselves react to the Fall with rage, joy, outright panic, and in many other ways; all are understandable reactions. Save for the Rokea, who don't care to discuss it, and the Mokolé, who don't seem to remember it, none of the extant Changers have experienced anything like this. Use the following as guidelines for the various factions, or take things in accordance with how you see them.

Garou Nation

In some cases, story seeds involve one tribe more than others, but for many events, more than one tribe reacts to a crisis or approaches a problem together. These potential events and decisions may either involve the players' characters or serve as backdrop for other, more personal events of the Storyteller's own creation. Note that these are only very general stereotypes, not rules of engagement by any means.

• **Black Furies** see the destruction of the wild places as horrific. Deianeira Seeks-The-Sky, a sibyl, reveals to them that this has happened before: end as beginning, death as creation. They work to preserve women's lives in the anarchy of the Fall, and some Fury sisters die protecting human and Kin females. Freebooters reveal hidden treasures at this point: cloaks and hoods of healing and warmth, winebowls that purify water and food, caches of supplies and refuges for women only. While the Furies have always fought for women, the practical basis of their

actions is clear. For the survival of the human and wolf species, more females than males need to live.

The Outer and Inner Calyxes convene at the Furies' Sept of Bygone Visions and decide that the Furies can save other Garou and Kin by hijacking the prophecy stating that "a tribe shall fall." After all, the Sacrifice of the Croatan spared the world from Eater-of-Souls for centuries, did it not? With the deciding votes of Althea Baneslayer and Aphrodite Delphius, the fate of Pegasus' daughters is sealed.

As the Final Battle approaches, Furies depart on a mission to the heart of Malfeas, their intent being to attack the Wyrm at its core and kill the satrap of Malfeas, Number Two. The Fury host is called the Pharmake in Greek, meaning, first, a sacrificial victim, and also a drug or poison. While other tribes speak of the Furies' "sacrifice," the Pharmake is really an attempt to poison the Wyrm's evil and heal what can be healed in it to restore the Balance. Furies who hear this call may choose to accompany the Inner Calyx matriarchs; any (female) Changer who wishes to accompany them is welcome; the host includes several Bastet and one Mokolé. At the last minute, the Furies accept the pleas of Tiresias to allow the sons of Furies to follow, including both the male metis that have remained with the tribe and the males of other tribes who count a Fury as mother.

The Furies go directly to Malfeas through paths found by the Freebooters and Sisterhood long ago. They and their allies carry some of the most potent fetishes ever unearthed, some so powerful that they have been hidden till now by the Inner Calyx. Soon after the expedition leaves, Wyrm forces on Earth, from the lowly Burgermen up to the great Maeljin Incarnae that have materialized, begin to show a certain confusion and loss of hope. They are "blinded," it seems, and have neither access to resupply from Malfeas nor much Umbral capability. It is clear that the Furies have at least confused the Wyrm for a time, possibly long enough for the Garou to win the Final Battle on Earth against their demoralized and demented opponents. Some Garou seers claim that the Wyrm is so damaged by the attack that it has returned to its original state as Balancer.

None of the Furies return, but in the Last Battle, great white-pelted war-women appear on many battlefields, Amazon shapeshifters howling out spells and wielding arms of unknown might. Whether these are the White Furies, reborn after their plundering of Hell, is unknown.

• Important goals for **Bone Gnawers** include food and shelter for their inner-city Kin and eventually leading refugees from the burning cities. Rural Bone Gnawers fare somewhat better in their backcountry caerns. Their knowledge of remote terrain aids other Garou in defending the last caerns. Some few Deserters seek an "Umbral Ark," but this is as fruitless as any attempt at an Umbral exodus. The most awful fate is that of the Maneaters: confronted with an overabundance of their favorite food in the blasted cities after the Fall, these cannibals indulge until their souls are lost to the Wyrm. When the supply of fresh carcasses runs out, the Black Spiral Dancers offer more. Few have the willpower to refuse.

The Bone Gnawers, last of all, prove invaluable as dirty fighters: "death from below" reigns as the Bloodhounds launch savage attacks on vampires and other hellspawn.

• Ritemasters call the **Children of Gaia** to the caerns one last time, performing the End Time Rite (see **Tribebook: Children of Gaia**) in any caern where it can be practiced. Garret Faithful, True Silverheels and Pearl-of-the-River join other elders in saying that the tribe's mission of peace is now a mandate to wage the War as justly as possible and to save as many innocents as they can. This certainly includes fighting and killing and the Children take their places in battle lines.

Despite the abolition of camps by leader True Silverheels, the Imminent Strike stands ready and joins Garou of other tribes in attacks on Black Spiral, fomor and Wyrm-monster sites; Blythe Holdsclaw is one of the leaders coordinating multitribal packs. The former members of the Patient Deed join them: the time has come. Seekers of the Lost now conclude their quest. These "X-Files" Garou serve as brokers and diplomats in the Reconciliation of the Garou and the Mokolé. The opening of Mnesis to the Garou assures the Seekers who are able to partake of this ritual that they have succeeded: The lost tribes are alive in the Memory of Gaia and the world can be saved.

The most dangerous force is the Bringers of Eternal Peace, those Children fallen to the Wyrm. Preaching that the "True Father" is the only surety in a lost world, these mad wretches actually make some converts owing to the Children of Gaia's infamous open-mindedness.

• The **Fianna**, deep heart of the Garou Nation, are among the bravest and best warriors of the Final Battle. Howling their battle songs, they go forth gladly to slay Wyrmthings for Gaia. The Songkeepers record all deeds of the Final Days, hoping someday to sing the last verse of the Silver Record. The most important camp is the Brotherhood of Herne, racing down moon bridges to aid Garou at caerns under siege. This rapid response enables caerns (including the troupe's caern?) to last much longer.

In Australia, Noirin ni Donneal, the new righ, proves to be a valuable Garou leader and unites Gaian Garou at Uluru (Ayers Rock) for a last battle against the Wyrm-horde led by Greatstripe and the false Bunyip.

The Reconciliation with the Mokolé is repugnant to traditionalist Fianna, who hate and fear the Dragon Breed. If possible, Fianna at the negotiations may sabotage the proceedings, believing them to be a surrender to the Wyrm.

If anyone is alive after the Last Battle, the Fianna Galliards raise their voices in song to remember.

• The **Get of Fenris**, led by heroes like Golgol Fangs-First, greet the Apocalypse with Rage, grim resignation, and in some cases even savage joy. The long-ago sibyl's weird prophecy of Ragnarok, called the *Voluspa*, or Song of the Seeress, guides the Gift: Myth Walking. The greatest Fenrir heroes take on the aspects of their legendary ancestral heroes to battle the Wyrm on Nitha Fell. Other Get follow Thunder's-Teeth, a Finnish lupus war leader, to hunt down and kill any suspected of being "of the Wyrm". This "Hel-Hunt" unearths many among the Garou's ranks who were secretly following the Wyrm, including members of the Bringers of Eternal Peace, Bone Gnawer Maneaters, and others.

The Fenrir devote special attention to the fires which rage in the Great Black, battling the fire-spirits in the physical world and the Umbra with might and Gifts. In the Umbra, the fire elementals have swollen to enormous size, and slay many Get seeking to put them out. Their heroism against this threat saves both humans and Kin in many lands.

Some Fenrir use their strength and speed to gather as many Kin as they can into safe places, starting with their own families. This is a dangerous struggle in the face of the human disturbances, roving monsters and bizarre weather of the Great Black.

Finally, all Fenrir go roaring forth to the Battlefields and fight the Wyrm, or those who are believed to be "of the Wyrm". The Gift "Good Death" serves them well. The Get have few survivors after the Last Battles. Great Fenris, manifests in a Fenrir hero and dies in the Battle. The tribe does not fall, but rises to immortal glory.

• The **Glass Walkers**, most modern of Garou, once dismissed the Apocalypse as a tribal myth born of Garou self-loathing. However, they learn of Geographos' hurtling toward the Earth before any other Garou, and their "deep impact" warnings save many lives as their supercomputers predict the sites of asteroid strikes and probable damage. Kinfolk can leave strike zones and ships can leave port (at sea, the ships can better ride out the enormous waves). The role of the Random Interrupts, Dies Ultimae, and Corporate Wolves who cooperate with the strangest of all redeemers, the Machine Messiah,

is detailed elsewhere. Of the other Glass Walkers, there is much to say.

The Umbral Pilots fail in their quests for a new Gaia, and Umbral storms wreck any planned "exodus." Corporate Wolves watch their companies dissolve and skyscraper caerns become unusable owing to power and water failures. Survivors, directed by Elizabeth Genereader, use remaining computers and electronics to wreck Pentex systems, sabotage Wyrm armies on the battlefields, and aid Garou victory. Even a shapeshifter benefits from improved combat imaging, after all. Many Bone Gnawer caerns take in the powerful Glass Walkers and joke that they have "fallen." For their part, the Glass Walkers are glad to have the Bone Gnawers' skill at scavenging machine parts, batteries, bottled water and food. Clashing Boom-Boom inspires the Glass Walkers to heroism, and Genereader falls in single combat against a mighty Black Spiral Dancer.

In the midst of the chaos, Julia "Firewall" Spencer and a few of her colleagues engage in a powerful rite, designed to heal the Weaver so that Gaia might live. Player characters might be involved in this rite, sent to observe or aid, or might contact Spencer some other way. The ultimate fate of Julia Spencer and her fellow city-wolves is up to the Storyteller, but a Weaver with even a slight bit of solace brought to it might portend more good than bad beyond the Apocalypse.

The few living Cyber Dogs emerge from hiding for the Last Battle and distinguish themselves mightily. As their former leader has died, they simply throw themselves into battle against fomori, who fear the Dogs' physical appearance. Genereader's software crusade enhances the Dogs' powers tremendously. The Glass Walkers alive after the Battles mostly "lose the wolf" and declare that Gaia no longer needs them.

• The **Red Talons** have lost enormous numbers of their tribe in the conflicts leading up to the Fall. In addition, the deaths of huge numbers of their Kin (wolves) and the attempts of Talons to save them has killed many of the Wyld's Tribe, and thrown many others into Harano. By the coming of the Great Black only 350 Talons remain outside Australia. Coordinated by Sunrise-Heart, elder at the Unnamed Wolf Caern in British Columbia, the Talons of the First Rage sept call any Garou who wish to join them and perform the Rite of Gaia's Rebirth. This great rite is intended to restore the Mother to Her rightful health and strength; its overall effects are up to the Storyteller, but many stories can weave around the Talons' final blow for the Mother. Most Talons also undergo the Rite of Gaia's Treasure (see the Appendix). As almost the last predators on Gaia's face, they feel a terrific responsibility to the world. The Talons then go forth to the Final Battle and fight heroically. Those who die do so knowing that the rite will enable new life to be born.

• Margrave Yuri Konietzko, most prominent leader of the **Shadow Lords**, realizes as the Fall approaches that the Garou Nation greets the Apocalypse in crisis: tribes mortally opposed to each other, tribes split into dozens of warring factions, secret plots and schemes ranging from the merely contemptible to the truly demented. It's obvious to the Margrave that the Wyrm will use the Fall to conquer the world, and that the Garou, even unified, have little chance of opposing the Wyrm's Horde successfully. Someone has to bring unity and words will not suffice. The Shadow Lords, then, set about creating and maintaining unity among the tribes, and they pull no punches. Here, the new Cauldron of Storms camp is useful to the Margrave, creating last-minute wealth through quick and dirty deals and "requisitioning" supplies for the Lords from sources known only to them.

Konietzko approaches each tribe's leaders for assistance, most importantly to fight the awakening Zmei. He uses Fenrir as recruiters, Children of Gaia as diplomats, and Striders as message bearers in support of his efforts. His methods vary depending on which tribe he courts at the moment, and he tries every means at his disposal.

The Margrave leads (from the front and heroically) into battle after battle, which draws in many followers. He covertly bribes the heroes of other tribes with fetishes and talens, or threatens any who "desert" the Host with death for themselves, packmates or families. If he has to take Kin hostages or seize caerns to get Garou on his side, he does so. There are jokes that the Margrave's next "recruiting" assault will be on a Black Spiral Hive.

Despite his unpleasant methods, the Margrave succeeds better than any Garou leader since the end of the Wars of Rage in uniting the Nation as one. It is almost solely because of his work that there is a Gaian Host worthy of the name.

• The **Silent Striders**, scattered all over Gaia's face, have heard and spread lore of the end ever since the First Times, and know as much or more than any tribe. Harbingers have spread the new prophecies and other news from the Bering Strait to Tasmania and back. The catastrophes of the Fall cause a serious problem for Striders. Always the most ghost-haunted tribe, they begin to go mad as millions and then billions of humans die. Many less experienced Striders, and all Eaters of the Dead, enter permanent Harano or commit suicide from the chaos of the screaming Dead that surround them constantly. Mephi Faster-Than-Death sends a pack of Striders to the Strider homeland in the Umbra to seek the aid of Wepauwet, the homeland's immortal guardian. Wepauwet responds by "unlocking the air" with powerful Gifts: assume that any Strider who seeks the aid of Mephi

or Grek Twice-Tongue can withstand the ghostly assault. In game terms, a Strider with the Ghost Touched or Mindblock gifts (see **Tribebook: Silent Striders**) need not worry overmuch about ordinary ghosts, although powerful wraiths might cause them some trouble. Striders without access to appropriate rites of protection are subject to harassment by the Dead and may well fall into Harano or become violently deranged. Assume that by the Final Battle many Striders are mad, lost in Harano, or dead by murder or suicide.

But this doesn't stop the Striders from attacking the vampires of Egypt: the Ahadi has brought in the Mokolé and Bubasti as allies, and with their aid the Striders finally try to retake their Nile homeland. The fighting is very fierce, aided by the returning ancestor-spirits, who become more and more abundant as the war goes on. Whether this is because of Strider heroism, or because of some change in the world of the dead, is not clear.

• The **Silver Fangs** are at the forefront of the Nation in battle. King Albrecht's death (if he does indeed die) as he slays the Chosen One of the Wyrm, Zhyzhak, only increases the prestige of the ruling tribe in the Last Days. Because of the chaos of the Last Days, no new Gaian King replaces Albrecht (or the monstrous metis whom some claim took the Silver Crown from the dead King), but the Lodges of the Sun and Moon mobilize in force, accompanied by war troops of Kin. These Kin troops are small but well equipped. They strike at human enemies and, armed with silver ammunition, "Land Warrior" suits and automatic weapons, stand even against Black Spirals on the Battlefields

The Ivory Priesthood, like the Silent Striders, suffers increasing derangement as the freshly dead come to outnumber the living. Unless the Priest has access to powerful Gifts that silence the voices of the dead, assume that they go mad or fall into Harano after the onset of the Great Black. Some Priests kill themselves, while others become berserkers who attack the Wyrm's Horde without thought of their own lives. As with the Striders, any Priest to seek the aid of the Children of Gaia's Rite of Comfort or Rite of Asklepios continues to function normally.

On the Battlegrounds, the Fangs slay immense numbers of Wyrmspawn and defend their caerns to the last. As Silver Fang caerns fall, one by one, the Gaian lords fall back to defending the caerns of "lesser" tribes, giving their lives to do so if necessary. If you tell a story of the Last Caern, at least one Silver Fang should be among the defenders of the caern.

• The **Uktena**, more than any other Gaian tribe, know of the oncoming End and realize that their work is more important than ever.

The Ghost Dancers try to persuade the Wendigo to cooperate with other Garou tribes instead of "hunkering down" for the end. Some Wendigo Ghost Dancers actually join the Uktena in the Last Battle along with Kin from the Warpath and NAMID groups. The Earth Guides of the Uktena warn Kin and mortals of the End's imminence, but efforts to "save" non-Kin won't work very well.

Many stories center on the Banetenders: Can they keep the ever-stronger Wyrmthings under control as the suffering of humans feeds the monsters? The Banetenders are the key to the Uktena's role in weakening the Wyrm's Horde. Banetenders go with Margrave Konietzko to try to prolong the sleep of the Zmei and to fight them when they awake. The Banetenders Bridge-of-Birds and Gaiarose call for help when the Jaws of the True Father crack open the prison of the Wyrm-horror called Cataclysm underneath California's Hayward Fault, near San Francisco. Their failure to keep this thing under control results in the deaths of many humans in California.

What resources of fetishes, ritemasters and Gnosis must be diverted from last-minute missions and the defense of caerns to aid the cranky old Banetenders? Worst of all, how many Wyrm monsters have corrupted their despairing jailers as the End nears and the Uktena begin to fear that their ages-long struggle is fruitless?

• The **Wendigo** are faced with serious problems as the End comes. Native Americans, the nation's poorest minority, depend on distribution of food and supplies to reservations, which breaks down. Wolf Kin face a loss of game in the Great Black. While Evan Heals-the-Past takes a fair number of the Warpath and the Sacred Hoop to the Last Battle, many Ghost Dancers barricade themselves on their reservations or at sacred sites (there is no one to keep them out), pray, dance and witness the Unmaking. Stories about them could revolve around efforts to renew or heal the world (does the Sacred Ghost Dance work, this time?), death of Kin and friends, Wyrm assaults on the homeland (if the true people of a land die, does the land die with them?) and hope for the future.

• **Stargazers**, until recently the mystics of the Garou Nation, have been troubled since their defection to the Beast Courts. Should the secrets that their wisdom reveals be shared with the Nation? Or would the resulting panic harm more than it helps?

Such Stargazers as Antonine Teardrop and Monash End-To-The-Darkness quietly aid Garou packs in the West and move people, arms and resources where they can do the most good. A few Kailindorani mysteriously show up at critical junctures, using their gifts to kill. While it's unclear whether any shapeshifters will survive the coming darkness, the Stargazers use their knowledge for the best. In peace as in war, you never see them come or go.

• The **Ajaba** focus their efforts on the battlefields in Africa, where the heart of their dwindling numbers reside. Tragically, some of the hyena-kin throw in their lot with the Wyrm in the final days; the abuses they've suffered for so long come to a boil when the Jaws of the Wyrm open in Africa, and many simply snap. To the honor and glory of the rest, the remaining werehyenas refuse to give in so easily. Kisasi's clan is at the head of the battlefront in Africa, where they fight as fiercely and selflessly as any Garou.

• The **Ananasi**, on the other hand, do not fight on the battlefields of Ragnarok. Instead, they launch attack after attack on Malfeas, doing their utmost to free Queen Ananasa so that she can lend her power to restraining the Wyrm and assisting the Weaver in restoring things to where they should be. Their success may be tied to the Glass Walkers' efforts to strip some of the madness away from the Weaver, or to the Black Furies' assault on the same Realm. Ultimately, their mass onslaught helps weaken the forces of Hell itself, at the cost of nearly their entire race.

• The **Bastet**, Gaia's eyes, see too much and wish that they had not. The Pumonca join the Garou and Qualmi on the battlefields, lurking in Umbral Den-Realms to attack or divert. Bagheera and Khan roar into battle at the head of the Beast Courts' armies and war sentai. They behold the ruin of the world and see that the Beast Courts need to take action.

The Simba and Swara see the horror under the sands more clearly than any other Gaian creature. They follow the Ahadi to battle the strange "lost" Wyld-monster under the Kalahari. The Balam disappear as the Amazon becomes more and more Weaver-ized under the pressure of "reforestation" and then after the Fall target the remaining Wyrm-creatures. Almost certainly the Wyrm's Horde in South America is so weak from these guerilla attacks that it may fall to the Gaian Host. The clannish Bubasti face a different shadow, practicing dark rites unknown even to the magicians of Egypt, which lure the bloodsuckers of Egypt into the day, and to their doom. The Striders' assault on the vampires benefits greatly from the cats' magic. It is never clear what exactly the Bubasti are capable of, or when they have helped the Striders; the Striders and the Mokolé-mbembe prefer not to see the shadowcats too clearly.

The damned "lost tribe," the Ceilican, was lost to the Wyrm a few years back. Horribly, some return at the last: these hellcats see a chance for "revenge" and use their greatly enhanced abilities of stealth and deceit to lure other Bastet to doom.

• The **Corax** serve any and all Gaian shapeshifters as messengers and scouts in the War of the Apocalypse, even when crippled by the Great Black. Corax camps and societies work together as long as there are enough of the Breed to do so; paradoxically, individualists band together when necessary. The Order of Swift Light recruit all Corax who can fly and draft them into the War; the Battle Ravens and their daughters encourage other Corax to watch and report on all conflicts. Accurate information is essential in a conflict fought largely with deception, illusion and lies. For their part, the Garou open caerns to the Corax and share Gnosis with them as much as is possible; that the ravens are damaged by the loss of the Sun is obvious.

The Sun-Lost, who fled long ago to the Shadow, return before the Fall, heeding the "scream of the Sun" These Umbral voyagers bring rites and artifacts to their Earth-bird cousins. This is a mechanism the Storyteller can use to make any Gift, fetish or rite (invented by the Storyteller or borrowed from any **Werewolf** book, for any Changing Breed) of a character's level or below, accessible… for a price. In the chaos of the Fall, this "Lore of the Lost" amounts to a powerful advantage for the Raven-Breed. Some may even use this Lore to venture out into the Umbra later, if there is a "later."

• The death of Gaia is not news to the **Gurahl**, Gaia's healers. They woke for a reason. They are the last hope Gaia's body has for recovery. Gurahl have places ("earth centers"), just as Garou packs have missions for the End. Each werebear goes to a place of wisdom, beauty or power (the redwoods, the source of the Colorado River, Grandfather Mountain, the Newfoundland fjords, and so on) and "stands for it." The River Keepers ward places along the Pacific waterways; the Mountain Guardians the remote alpine regions of the West. The Forest Walkers cover the rest of North America and some of Siberia; the Ice Stalkers seek out hallowed sites in the extreme cold of the polar regions after the Fall, places unknown even to Wendigo mystics, on Baffin Island, Greenland and in Alaska. Along with their Kin and helpers (a few Seekers of the Lost Tribes from the Children of Gaia, a few Uktena mystics), the bear-folk defend these spiritual wellsprings, fight off Wyrm things, and finally heal them. They practice the Rite of the Flawless Emerald (see Appendix) while doing this: this rite allows the ritemaster to heal the land by taking its wounds into her own body.

If any living creatures survive, the Gurahl are essential to Gaia's continued existence (let alone recovery). They continue to ward the places of beauty and power in the time after the Great Black, and life returns there first, fairest and foremost.

• The **Kitsune**, youngest of the Changers, sneak and steal so well that ungenerous souls suggest that Gaia made them for it. Their semi-mythical leader, Bai Mianxi, offers them a suggestion (as it is not easy to "order" these creatures around): Kitsune should each steal something from an enemy, living or dead, which will aid in the great battles at the Turning of the Wheel of Ages. Kitsune accordingly seek out spells, secrets, battle plans, True Names, places of refuge, artifacts, weapons, even maps and oracles belonging to the forces of Yomi. In some cases, they destroy the weapons and tools of the Enemy: the magical torture implements of the enemy Yama Kings cannot be used for good. Gaian Changers may find something missing that the Kitsune deem better used elsewhere! In others, the Nine-Tails use the stolen powers themselves. Yet other goods appear "mysteriously" in the hands of the Emerald Mother's sentai, and some even go to humans or other *shen* whom the Kitsune deem able to use these things.

Storytellers in an Eastern game might have the Kitsune work with the players to find, steal, destroy or transport a mysterious and dangerous item; in Western games the foxes may well show up with a "gift," often unwanted!

• The **Mokolé** are divided into three major groups. The Breed's tail flees: into space (the Dragonriggers who sail far into the Deep Umbra) or into time (the Nomads of Time, who enter the Sleep of the Dragon in their secret refuges, hoping vainly or otherwise to wake in a new world, survivors of yet another Wonderwork. Princess-of-Life-over-Death, mentioned elsewhere is one such. Her clutch holds a refuge deep in the Mbang Mountains of Cameroon, where they hope to sleep safely into a new time.

The belly of the race are the Mokolé who go deep into Mnesis to seek the lost Gifts and rites of the First Times, to remember the lost Kings and how they might have fallen, to provide living Changers with wisdom and power. Morwangu and Jeffo of the Gumagan began this process, but other Mokolé have followed: a clutch in Mississippi has forged tentative ties with a Silver Fang sept whose ancestors owned some Kin of the Mokolé…

Finally, the dragon's head are those Mokolé who join the Garou and the other Changers on the field of the Final Battle. The Wars of Rage are over and the last of Earth's dragons rise to defend Her. Here the Congo Clutch and the Makara led by Sun's Hand are prominent: the Spear of Mokolé-Mbembe himself has returned, and nothing can stand against it. Sun's Hand said "The dragons of War are opened," and the wrath of the Mokolé is as mighty as their Memory.

• Gaia's executioners, the **Nagah**, take up one last mission as the Apocalypse begins. A Nagah seer,

Mayadasa, has prophesied to the snake-shifters that Gaia would forgive them for their role in starting the Wars of Rage if they went into the hordes of the Wyrm and slew as many powerful leaders as there were Nagah alive. Skeptical Nagah wondered whether this was an oracular revelation or merely a rational policy choice, as the Nagah have neither the numbers nor the ability to oppose Darkness on the battlefield. The Nagah take up this mission as the Fall smashes holes in the Earth and the Jaws of the True Father roast Changers and humans alike. Nagah skills of infiltration, deception and assassination have never been better employed.

Nagah characters receive a mission, just as do Garou packs, but in most cases the snakes are sent to kill human, fomor, Black Spiral Dancer and worse leaders. They use poison, Gifts, fetishes, even human explosives and firearms, to assassinate the "weak links" in the Wyrm's power structure. This is very important: without the demonic command of the powerful Maeljin and their lieutenants, the Wyrm Horde is a leaderless mob which Garou and other Gaian creatures can easily cut into pieces and mop up as its members attack each other.

The Nagah have every intention of surviving the Wonderwork, as do their cousins the Mokolé; how many are left after the smoke of the Final Battle clears is not apparent. It is likely that surviving Nagah simply hide with any remaining clutches of Mokolé, and so many Changers may remain unaware of the existence of the Nagah.

• The **Nuwisha** have always claimed that the Trickster, their motherfather Coyote, made the world and may well unmake it, if only as a practical joke. As no one, not even Gaia Herself, has ever been able to force the Nuwisha to act as a group ("like herding cats," as Laughing Manyskins put it long ago), the coyote-folk react to the End each in their own way.

Each Nuwisha determines a course of action by an unknown means (although the Corax spread the rumor that the Nuwisha are choosing these actions by drawing straws from a cowboy hat), and then follows this strange personal quest. However, each of these tasks turns out to aid Gaia in some way. A Nuwisha who blew up buildings as "guerilla theater" might prevent deadly fires from spreading; another might steal a truck of dog food at gunpoint and drive it into the wilderness to feed coyote and wolf Kin. Still another might set up a moonshine still to make alcohol so that humans can use it to treat wounds and sterilize drinking water. In the end, the Nuwisha laugh all the way to the Apocalypse, and, Gaia grant, beyond.

• On the face of it, no Breed would seem to be better prepared than the **Ratkin**. Reveling in spreading SARS, the Red Death and Rift Valley fever, dug into tunnels impregnable to any foe, the Ratkin are perhaps the most numerous Changers extant. However, the outbursts of disease have wakened powerful enemies among the other Changers as well as the non-Gaian supernatural beings. Garou and spirits hunt down Ratkin and the collapse of cities in the Fall weakens the Breed tremendously. Many Ratkin are not as well adapted to survive in the absence of large human populations, as Garou and Mokolé are, and their numbers decline sharply.

Some Munchmausen return before the end and tell the Ratkin that there is no salvation in fleeing Gaia. The Ratkin are in the unenviable position of being parasites on a dying host.

The Plague Lords issue a last command: the Ratkin who can hear their call, and are alive, are to burrow into the Horde of the Wyrm and destroy as much of the Enemy's work as they can. Madame Defarge and her followers quickly devise ailments that affect materialized Banes, Black Spiral Dancers and fomori: the noxious practices common among the Wyrm' followers make the spread of disease almost certain. Knives, poison and nooses kill enough of the Horde to throw the rest into confusion. (After all, many servants of the Wyrm hate each other as much as they do the Garou!). While this mission is uncomfortable and survival, frankly, isn't likely, the deviousness and destructiveness of the Ratkin cause a great deal of trouble among the Wyrm's servants. Assume that any Wyrm army infiltrated by the Ratkin suffers at least a 10% loss of strength.

• The **Rokea**, oldest (some say) of Changers, are survivors, taking no part in the Wars. Save for a few betweeners and kadugo, the sharks hardly notice the struggles in human society.

The Fall changes this. Rokea of learning recall the last Apocalypse and seek the deepest ocean, where Fire-Within-Darkness, a Darkwater mystic, communed with the spirits of underwater volcanoes, and the ancient survivor of Turna'a, Silvertail, leads a slew of last-chance "survivalists" down to the mid-ocean rifts. Others, labeled as "C'etspawn" by the majority of Rokea for their calculating nature, gorge on the dead of the Fall, many of whom are washed out to sea or can be gleaned by swimming to Unsea, and then hibernate for a year or so. It is certain that the Rokea will be the most numerous and prosperous of the Breeds in the period following the Great Black (if anything is left at all). They were built to survive.

Stories might center on betweeners lost in the chaos of the Fall and trying to get back to Sea, or trying to save kadugo. The filth and pollution created by the Fall is also a source of concern; so is the imminent death of most Rorqual (unless brave Rokea can save them).

The Others

The World of Darkness contains many other supernatural beings, which, with their subgroups, enemies and allies are almost too numerous to list. Each **Werewolf** Storyteller has a different opinion on these groups and their place in the game: some love to mix character types, while others loathe "crossover" games and don't make non-Changers into fully developed characters. When telling tales of the Apocalypse, each Storyteller should proceed according to the way in which they have used these characters in the previous stories of the chronicle. If the chronicle is set in a Canadian wilderness, there is no point describing what each dynasty of Mummies is going to do; if fighting and hunting the undead has been central to the game, then the Storyteller should include a wild, screaming battle against vampires as part of the story. In general, assume that these groups react in a way that reflects their human nature, or lack of it.

The Ascent From Hell

And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, with seven heads and ten horns, and ten crowns upon his horns, and on his heads the names of blasphemy.

— Revelation 13:1

The Great Black, horrific as it is, is only the beginning of the End of All Songs. The deaths of billions of humans and animals to hunger, fire and cold opens the mouth of Darkness and allows nightmare to walk. The Wyrm's Horde emerges from the Jaws of the True Father and walks the Earth openly. Materializing bodies on Earth or possessing the dead, the Maeljin and their subordinates gather all that is evil and mad about them as the world dies.

The Horde is led by the devils of Malfeas. The Maeljin materialize using the energy created by death. Assume that their physical forms resemble the spirit forms mentioned in Book of the Wyrm. Hellbringer leads the Host, although Lord Steel commands the Army of the Eater-of-Souls and the Nameless Angel (addressed as "General Sir") commands the Army of the Defiler Wyrm. The Hellbringer commands the Army of Beast-of-War on Earth, putting Lady Aife and Empress Aliara in charge of prisoners. The Hellbringer appoints Maine duBois as diplomat: He lies and threatens the Garou and other Gaians to try to get them to surrender, offering them "safe passage" to Umbral realms where they may live unmolested. The Maeljin torture any Garou who surrender and use them as bait to bring in more Garou to "rescue" them, who the Maeljin then capture in turn and so on.

The remaining Maeljin Incarnae have other functions. Kerne, the Bane-lord of Radiation, spreads radioactive areas wherever he treads. His followers slowly die from radiation sickness, but anyone they fight faces the same danger. Lord Choke is invisible — he is Master of Smog and rides above the Horde in the clouds of the Great Black. A hundred square miles around Lord Choke is dark as night because of his shadow. If he is killed, the intensity of sunlight grows until a normal (if cloudy) day seems to be in effect. Lady Yul and Lord Collum, masters of poison and sludge, ride behind the Horde polluting everywhere it has been and equip their fomor, Black Spiral and human soldiers with poison gas and poisoned weapons. Doge Klypse and Thurifuge, the Master of Stagnation, remain in Malfeas and the Black Furies may well slay them while on their way to kill Number Two. Note that the Maeljin of the Horde are materially here on Earth as living beings. They are not also in Malfeas, and the Furies' Pharmake does not touch them. However, the success of the Furies "blinds" the Horde and the Maeljin are vulnerable: if the Gaian Host kills them, they are dead and can spiritually re-form only slowly if at all.

The Fallen Tribe erupt from their Hives, carrying their prisoners and human Kin with them, and form a large cohort of the Army of the Defiler Wyrm, commanded by Ghraak Dives-Backward, who claims to be Mockmaw reborn under the Myth Walking Gift.

Other Wyrm creatures such as fomori and bloodsucking monsters form the Army of the Eater-Of-Souls, promised by their cruel leader that their victory will return the Eater-of-Souls to the material world once again, undoing the Croatan Sacrifice. A frightening part of the Army of the Eater-of-Souls is humans with sorcerous powers. Robbed of victory in a wizards' "war" (in as much as any Garou understands these matters), these "fallen" magicians seek revenge and have quite literally sold their own souls to get the powers that they possess. Exactly what powers they have is not clear, but they are a dangerous enemy.

Finally, humans form the bulk of the Wyrm's Horde. The evil among the human race hope to gain favors and riches by serving the Evil Ones. The Maeljin threaten and bribe communities to get recruits and military information for the war, but such is not really necessary. Humans join the Wyrm without prompting; they always did before.

Human governments and military oppose the Horde as it advances on caerns, and they fail to stop it. The chaos and devastation that the Horde's birth and movement cause is secondary, however. The Horde intends to seek out Gaia's Defenders, the Garou, and destroy them.

The Sacrifice of the Furies has the effect of "blinding" the Horde: while the Maeljin and others retain their powers, it is clear that their command oversight is gone. Umbral travel back to Malfeas as well as powers of foresight are gone. Whether this decapitation of the Wyrm's leadership is permanent or temporary is also unclear, but the derangement should last long enough to give the Gaian

Host a fighting chance ("all we've ever had, anyway," as Ringer of the Children of Gaia said). Nevertheless, the Horde is a formidable foe even with these problems.

The Battles of the Apocalypse

The Wyrm's Horde erupting onto the Earth ends all semblance of normalcy; no one can continue to pretend that this is merely a natural disaster. Gaia's remaining children now form a Gaian Host to oppose the Wyrm on the Battlefields of the Apocalypse. The Garou can maneuver to sites near the Wyrm's Hosts, or clump around caerns and Kin and allow the enemy to come to them. The usual military rules apply: discipline in camp, rationing food and fuel (most of the earth is cold by this point), drilling in tactics (Garou do not march) and strategy: occupy strong points, don't divide your forces, and so on.

King of the Wolves

The ascension of Jonas Albrecht to the throne once occupied by his mad grandfather, Jacob Morningkill, is the best possible sign for the Silver Fangs as the End approaches. The ruling tribe's claim to lordship hardly makes sense without the presence of a mighty Gaian warrior as their leader. Albrecht's packmates, Mari and Evan, bring with them alliance with their tribes, and through the mediation of the Children of Gaia and others, Albrecht has brought a degree of unity to the American Garou unknown in a hundred years.

The rise of Zhyzhak, an extremely powerful Black Spiral Dancer, has led to interest in the prophecies of her packmate Nhaukh, who predicted that Zhyzhak would crush the last Gaian King under her heel. Although it isn't clear that Albrecht's death (or even his position as the Last Gaian King) is certain, a few of Nhaukh's predictions have proven accurate so far. Perhaps he can truly predict the future; perhaps he is merely extremely lucky; perhaps he uses unknown Gifts to warp reality. If your players are interested in the fate of these two characters, this scenario provides a way for them to be first-hand witnesses to Zhyzhak and Albrecht's battle. The players should not know before they play out this story which is the true interpretation of the prophecy.

The Battlegrounds include the one (in New York, or some other place) where a Thunderwyrm, a living Wyrm-caern, erupts from the earth and vomits out Zhyzhak and her pack of Black Spirals. They face the Gaian Host in the Last Battle. Indeed, Albrecht, Mari Cabrah of the Black Furies, Evan Heals-The-Past, and their mates may well defend the Last Caern. Why would they not? Albrecht's armor is pitted and splashed with blood and Wyrm-ichor, Evan wounded, and Mari near mad from exhaustion and her spirit-workings by the time that Albrecht catches sight of the huge Zhyzhak, proclaimed the Chosen of the Green Dragon. Her pack accompanies her, and Albrecht advances with his grand klaive Solemn Lord, the Silver Crown gleaming in his long hair. Nearby stand the player characters, who have fought fiercely with klaives, Gifts and their own fangs and claws.

Albrecht and Zhyzhak go at it, her Devilwhip flashing. The battle is greater than any of legend. Meanwhile the players may take on other creatures, or watch almost helplessly. While King Albrecht is a mighty warrior with superb weapons and armor, Zhyzhak has ghastly Gifts, some of which Albrecht does not know about, and others which he cannot counter. In addition, she is the strongest Garou to have lived since the Wars of Rage, stronger even than the Mokolé or a huge Gurahl. Zhyzhak's pack should also begin to attack King Albrecht. Evan, Albrecht's packmate, falls, his fetish-spear broken. As the fight goes on, Mari calls on her own Gifts, which prove useless. She turns to the players. "My own powers are exhausted," the last Fury says. "But you are still strong. If Albrecht falls… the heart is gone. The Last Caern will fall to the Wyrm. Help him… or all will die."

The players should then wade into combat to help the wounded King against Zhyzhak and possibly against her packmates as well. It is apparent then that the mad prophet is also with Zhyzhak. If the players kill Nhaukh, the whole tenor of the battle changes. Zhyzhak's strikes seem weaker, her Gifts less focused. She is visibly wondering whether or not the prophecy still holds true.

The players' intervention should make a difference in the outcome of the battle. If Nhaukh dies, the prophecy no longer binds anyone. Nhaukh's powerful Gifts steered Fate to cause his predictions to come true, but he can no longer do this. Albrecht may kill Zhyzhak, or the two may kill each other, or the King may later die of his wounds. But death on the field of battle is a King's fate, and he would wish no easier exit. If his death enables the Last Caern to stand, then he dies fulfilled, and without a successor. "The Nation doesn't need a King any more," he says as he is dying. "Only heroes."

After Albrecht slays Zhyzhak and the players aid Mari to kill Zhyzhak's packmates, the players are praised as heroes. Evan dies of his wounds, his stoicism breaking down at the last when he hears that Albrecht, who saved his life, is dead. Told that Zhyzhak is dead also, he will be less distraught. The Garou Nation has lost a King, he says, but gained a legend.

Where exactly the player characters are is up to them and the Storyteller. There are several Battlegrounds specified in this book, and the Storyteller may of course invent her own. Almost any place could be a battleground, but the Garou armies form up at places that are important to them (the Amazon, the Finger Lakes of New York) or to humans (Megiddo, Uluru, New York) or to the spirits (mystic and holy places). The Fall has killed many humans, but enough humans and Garou remain alive that the Wyrm has not yet won. So long as the Garou remain viable, even in the Umbra, they could always return and destroy the Wyrm's control of the ruined Earth. They must be annihilated for the conquest to be complete.

The Battlegrounds of the World

The following are some sample scenarios for the Final Battle as it plays out in various portions of the world. Use them to challenge your own players, or as sample ideas to customize the battleground most appropriate for your chronicle.

Battleground: California

Digs-for-Stories looked out from the slope of Mount Diablo; even Garou senses didn't show everything in the murk and fog. Broken roads, burning cities, the evil under it all that had lain hidden for so long.

"The caern—"

"Eaten." Diane Stone was her usual serious self, almost as fast

on her bike as a Garou afoot, and she knew the Bay like a tongue in its mouth. "No way to fight that thing. We got about half the Kin out alive, to a house Aunt Chu had with its own well and generator." Her face was haggard; the Fall had already killed so many, and then the earth shaking, and the fires... "We have to try to fight it, but I don't know where." A steady stream of cars negotiated the wrecked freeways, trying to go east. Sacramento would be no refuge, not with the Sierra snow melting. The valley floor below them was already beginning to flood. On a clear day, he remembered, you could see Yosemite's Half Dome from here. No knowing when that would come again.

"We have to fight it. Not just try. Look, Diane, I've heard a lot of stories. This is just the one we're in. There's got to be a way to back it up, something it wants."

"Gnosis, but it's drained the caerns. Pain and death — a hospital?"

"Or the mountain passes on Highway 80." He thought fast. "If it stirred enough car crashes, they'd be impassable; you couldn't even remove the vehicles. And no one could get east then, except on foot. It would feast then!" The two warriors of Gaia, Garou and Kin, looked at each other. "Call Rainbyrd. We'll need a Theurge there. Some blood. Something to call it." A deep breath. "Won't be pretty."

"Nothing is, not now. Let's get to it."

California, home of Hollywood and redwoods, mighty mountains and fertile farms, is home to many Garou, spirits, and Wyrm-creatures. While its resources are plentiful, its population is mostly located on waterless and tectonically unstable land. The Great Black kills millions that had survived the tidal waves and impacts of the Fall. In addition, the release of a terrible Bane, called the Cataclysm, and the opening of the Jaws of the True Father causes the deaths of millions of humans and other animals.

The Fall shakes California and causes the sixty-mile-long Hayward Fault, east of San Francisco, to slip. The soil over large areas of the San Francisco Bay area is landfill or marsh, and when the earth quakes it "liquefies," flowing as if it were syrup or jelly. This process increases the mobility of soil and the destructiveness of quakes. The resulting earthquake registers 7.2 on the Richter scale.

The fault runs across the Hetch Hetchy and Mokelumne aqueducts and main 230-volt power lines for the Bay Area, as well as highways 80 and 580. The quake severs these. The wrecking of the sewage system backs raw sewage up into the streets. This causes and spreads illness, more so than the cold. The highway tunnels and bridges go out of service, and, given the chaos of the Fall, are unlikely to be fixed. Thousands die when the Bay Bridge and Golden Gate Bridges warp, buckle and collapse.

Traffic jams don't clear for two days and numerous motorists abandon their cars, causing more blockage; much road surface around the Bay is elevated or on fill soil, and both collapse as shaking causes fill soils to "liquefy" and destroys elevated structures. Water is unavailable after the quake wrecks the aqueducts. This, along with the disruption of pipes and electricity, means that a period of several months passes during which half to three-quarters of the Bay Area's millions lack water. Most of San Francisco has none at all. The restoration of the water supply, however, depends on the availability of humans and equipment to repair the damage, and until the end of the Great Black, these aren't available; after the Great Black, they may not exist.

The destruction of the aqueduct system leads to water rationing in Southern California, already damaged by tidal waves. Over the following four months, the water supply fails completely owing to more damage to pipes and canals, lack of maintenance, and finally lack of fuel to run the pumps that bring Colorado and Owens Valley water into Los Angeles and San Diego. The result is death for at least five million people and the evacuation by road and ship of the remainder. No large urban centers exist in Southern California a year after the Fall.

Autumn in California is the driest time of the year, and the Fall leads to incredible fires. Fire damages perhaps a quarter of the Bay Area and half Los Angeles, and fires are impossible to put out without water and with blocked roads. As fires reach the Richmond, Oakland and San Rafael waterfronts, tanks of gasoline, chemicals and oil catch fire, explode and burn, causing immense amounts of damage and loss of life. In Southern California, fires destroy huge areas of Los Angeles and San Diego as well as the forested mountains near them. Smog from fires kills at least a million people in the Sacramento Valley and Los Angeles, as the smoke cannot escape the valleys that these cities are in.

The deaths of humans and Garou as the disasters strike California opens the world to domination by the Wyrm, and the physical sign of this is the opening of the Jaws of the True Father beneath Fremont and Hayward in the East Bay. The Jaws spread north and south, spewing poison and swallowing hills, houses, streams and human souls. If they reach the Delta, twenty miles north, then the waters of the river pour into the earth, releasing clouds of poison steam.

The worst problem is the freeing of the Cataclysm, the huge Bane-thing held captive under San Francisco that feeds on human pain and death. Although made larger and stronger in the 1980s by AIDS, the Cataclysm did not yet escape because of the lessening number of AIDS deaths due to new medicines and community care for patients. Then the Jaws of the True Father chew

through the Cataclysm's prison and release it. This huge monster tries to make its way to the nearest caern to drain it and destroy any inhabitants. The Garou must destroy it, even at the cost of their own and their Kins' lives, for the Cataclysm gains Power with each human it kills. From the death of San Francisco, it has the potential to become the most powerful Bane in the Tellurian, and to challenge the Hellbringer for its command of the Host.

The Garou need to track the deadly Bane to its feeding grounds at a disaster site, hospital, etc, and try to confront and kill it. Unfortunately, it grows stronger from the pain and death of Garou as well.

If the Garou kill the Cataclysm, several things happen. First, the Jaws of the True Father, which feed off the power of the Wyrm, stop expanding. Second, the Black Spirals, Pentex fomori, and other Wyrm-things lose heart. The Battle here can possibly be won, although almost nothing recognizable as "California" survives. The future of the Golden State, as chaotic and bloody as its past, depends on the ability and determination of its people.

Battleground: Kalahari

The mangetti tree was still alive, a few leaves clinging to branches. Nisa Bao's daughter walked with her dogman companion into darkness and fear.

"So the dark came because—"

"Skystones fell into the sea. Yes," the Kucha Ekundu said, trotting beside her in wild dog-shape. "But it's easier here than some other places. Warmer, farther from storms. Fewer humans to starve or spread sickness." She silently thanked the spirits for that. "Here the illganwasi baKalahari is our problem. You spoke to the trance-men at the reservation. What did they see?"

Nisa chose her words with care. "That the thing under the Nyae Nyae sands is deadly, and huge. That it was not always our Enemy." She took a breath, tightened the kaross of tradecloth round her shoulders in the cold wind. A truck would be faster but they must be saved now for emergencies, and few of those. The tribe had only two. "It was a Maker, Xhai said, one of the true illganwasi of God. But this land's suffering, the bakra man's hurt, made it angry, so angry it could not but make others suffer."

"And you believe this to be true." For a wild dog, an African wolf, he was levelheaded, that was certain. The sacred site was close, her old feet more comfortable than shoes on the desert "pavement."

"I know it. I took the dream-root, two nights past and walked the Bush-of-Ghosts road. My mother's mother, in the moon, she told me what she knew. That it was a maker, not an unmaker. That its darkness could lift." She let out a sigh. "That was more frightening than the idea that we should fight it, fight something bigger than the bakra man's ships or airplanes. To kill it...easier than making a friend of it."

"I'd sooner befriend the distemper! But your old ones are wise." He padded on. "Thank you, sister." A smile creased her dark face, and she twisted her necklace of ostrich-shell beads. "Thank you."

The deep African desert covers a monster terrifying to Garou and to the native Swara Bastet, the illganwasi baKalahari, or desert goddevil. A Wyld creature of power, this being is greater in the Wyld's non-hierarchy than even the Gorgons. This illganwasi (the title is !Kung San and means a mighty servant of God), was the maker of life on the African continent.

Migration and war reshaped the land. Replacing an Eden-like hunter-gatherer lifestyle, the encroaching Bantu brought an Iron Age culture of herding animals, planting crops and tribal warfare. The ancient one became silent, hidden beneath the desert sands in the territory of the last remaining hunter-gatherers, the San "bushmen."

The coming of bakra (Europeans) who enslaved or slew the African natives changed the land still further, European and Asian crops and animals transforming the land. The illganwasi became hostile, poisoned by hatred and fear. The few who managed any contact with it recoiled. Now the Fall and the Great Black seem as if they will unleash this monstrous thing. What may happen?

Africa south of the Sahara is less damaged by the Fall than by the Jaws of the True Father and the eruptions of Wyrm-monsters from them. Between the interruptions of aid shipments, ruined crops, dead herds, lost technology, warfare and AIDS, hundreds of millions die. Wyrm-devils, fed by the human pain, are powerful, drunk with the forces of loss and grief. But if the Garou can contain these things in a series of battles, they have a chance to come against the illganwasi, the demon beneath the sand.

This is the strangest "battleground": the enemy is not a Wyrm creature, and although hostile, it is not evil. The End may not involve a huge battle here at all. While the task would not be an easy one, a sufficiently pious Theurge can learn from the Mokolé how to speak to the huge alien god-thing, and what to offer it in return for peace ("return the dance to the pulses of the Hunt"). It requires a quest in which the lost is returned: can the Mokolé restore lost species with the Rite of the Eidolon or by stealing shapes? Can the Garou dance the lost back into existence? The Garou have a second chance at Eden here. As difficult as it may be to attempt rapport with this immense, wounded thing from the dawn before time, they must try. The results of communication with a Lifemaker are obvious: the Kalahari has the potential to birth new (or old?) life in the new sun after the Fall. What wonders will come into being this time?

Battleground: Nitha Fells (Ragnarok)

Finnr Grimulfsson stood with his fellow Get behind the breastwork. Klaive and spear were ready by him. The fellfield stretched for miles across the mountaintops, sudden snow of the

final winter thin on the stones. Pines climbed the mountain slopes under the endless clouds. Black Spirals dodged the arrows and spears of the Get, taunted them. And among them, the giants — the Jotunn returned. Around him the Get grabbed spears and klaives for the charge.

There was a Gift, the Last Gift. Finnr had learned the words to invoke it... could this be the day? He said the words, then screamed them, his howl inaudible in the din.

Finnr Grimulfsson howled with them and Changed.

The Black Spirals morphed, shapes growing impossibly, until giant Garou walked the fell, advancing toward Fenris' brood that looked tiny by comparison. Beside Finnr his Kin trembled, clutching rifles and rocket launchers — Fenris gave each the weapon they could wield, as it had always been.

Great Fenris, *he prayed*, klaive in hand, thanks to you for letting me see this glory-day! *And felt Fenris answer.*

You are my warrior son, Finnr. Enter now into your inheritance.

The Garou felt himself Change and Change, far beyond the Crinos or even dreams' shape, until he bestrode the Fenrir's charge like a colossus. A hammer took the place of the klaive in his hand; ancient mail of silver steel covering him. Hail! He heard the Get host howl, Hail Rábjórn the Mighty, Son of Fenris! Beside him screeched great ravens, flanking Jarl Haakon, whose eyes shone with the wisdom of Frode...

The Gods strode forth to meet the Giants at Ragnarok.

Scandinavia and Russia face serious problems in the Fall. Although these lands are set up to withstand cold and dark, they also depend in most cases on distribution networks for food and fossil fuels. A more frightening issue is the Zmei. Whether or not the events of **Rage Across Russia** have occurred in your game, the Apocalypse means that a series of gigantic Wyrm-monsters, the Zmei dragons, awaken and surface. They are freed from their prisons by the evil spells of the Wyrm's minions, strengthened by pain and fear among the dying humans killed in the Fall, and ready to combine forces as never before. As one (Gregornous) of the Zmei killed over fifty Garou warriors before the monster himself died, the havoc wrought by the five remaining Zmei will be ghastly indeed.

Goluko is already free, followed by Rustarin, the Zmei leader. These two find Illyana, the loremaster, who reveals the locations of Shazear the trickster-dragon, and finally Trevero, the strongest of all. (While Baba Yaga could not free Trevero, the loremaster Illyana can do so with the help of three other Zmei). The dragons themselves gather other Wyrm-things to them, and as each of the Zmei is freed, it then goes to the lair of one of its siblings and digs to free them. The Garou had better plan to stop the first Zmei before the second can be freed. The battle will be bad enough without the additional dragons.

Margrave Konietzko is perhaps the only leader who has any chance of unifying the Garou of Europe and Russia in time to combat the hordes led by the Zmei. His unification pacts had already led to effective strikes by Furies, Shadow Lords and Talons against the Black Spiral Dancer Hives of Europe, and three Hives have been destroyed by the Gaian Garou. With the Fall, he faces the last and greatest challenge. His unorthodox "diplomacy" brings almost all remaining Gaian Garou into his Gaian Host. His most spectacular coup is the allegiance of the Children of Gaia, who save for a few almost-mad pacifists, join his war efforts. Janine Olive-Branch, ancient Child of Gaia, now bears her staff of peace not to stop the Apocalypse War, but to quiet tribal feuds so that the Wyrm can be defeated. While few Garou pursue tribal vendettas in the face of asteroid strikes, the cries of family and Kin pull many from the Battleground. The Margrave's skill at striking at any foe's fatal flaw enables him to kill at least one Zmei, but he will almost certainly die in the attempt. Konietzko, Magni Mountain-Breaker, and Tatyana Tvarivitch must be utterly ruthless: family and Kin die because Garou warriors are fighting the Wyrm. But, as is no secret, it has always been so.

Battleground: Uluru

The spring day was already hot as the Jindabyne Council's pack took its stand with the other Garou below the huge monadnock. Blossoms on a euphorbia were the only color for miles, save the eternal reds of the deep desert. Ahead she could see the hopping forms of the foe, striped bodies blending with the stone and sand, shapes no Garou had seen, save in zoo-made films or nightmares, for seventy-one years, the thylacine reborn, the Bunyip returned. The Bunyip signaled to the horde behind them. The Furies spotted the oncoming not-wolves and let out an Aranda battlechant.

How long we waited, hoped, for the Bunyip to return, thought Noirin ni Donnal. How long the peace-lovers pled with us to "atone." And now they have come, and our wish is granted. They are not fallen, not Black Spirals; they were created so, cloned, all unknowing making an enemy stronger than we could ever be.

Beside her Carla Grimsson held a mighty grand klaive, fingers in a fighting grip. "They'll close. Once they get over that ridge—"

"Better we shoot, innit?" The two warrior women locked eyes in a moment of perfect understanding.

"Kin, ready on my word..." The unreal not-wolves crested a ridge of stone and sand. "Fire when ready." Shots rang out, popcorn of small arms, roar of a crew-served weapon that resourceful Bone Gnawers had taken from an Army base... Some Garou had guns too; Noirin and Carla had given them to anyone who could shoot.

The deformed shapes of fomori and Black Spirals lurched and staggered closer. A cub near Carla retched when a fomor leaped closer by vomiting its whole body and then reforming from its anus. "Straighten up, Brand! You'll see worse." The monster horde closed, leaders visible now in litters borne by slaves, or towering over the Horde like gods in their giant misshapen bodies. Garou looked very small before that sight, Noirin reflected.

Small but mighty. Carla shouted, "At them, all of you! Show them how a warrior fights!"

We beat the Bunyip once, Noirin thought before the no-time of combat claimed her. We can do it again.

The major challenge for the Garou in Australia is that the Wyrm has turned many of the land's spirits against them through trickery. Thus, not only do Black Spirals and giant sand-Thunderwyrms have the aid of human dupes and remnants of Pentex, but the Bunyip wraith-Garou have been turned to the dark side by the evil pseudo-Bunyip created by the Child of Gaia metis scholar, Cernounos. This brilliant man cloned "Garou" from the skin and skeleton of a thylacine (the lost "lupine" Kin of the Bunyip) and blood samples supposedly from human Bunyip Kin. But bereft of the will of Gaia, the process could only go awry. The result was a pack of Wyrm-monsters more insane than the Black Spirals, and they soon abducted Cernounos and forced him to create more and more monstrous creatures for the greater glory of the True Father. The metis effectively became one of the Fallen himself, ironically through love of his own creations.

In the Last Days these monsters strike openly at small Australian towns, attempt to seize caerns such as the Barnambirr Caern in Kimberley, and massacre humans and dingoes. Once the Great Black has begun, they attempt to lure the remaining Garou of Australia to Uluru (Ayers Rock or Mount Olga), a place of power deep in the desert, for a last stand at Katajutu. The results of the battle depend on Garou and Kin bravery and preparedness.

Nightmarish bushfires blaze across the continent, deep into suburbs of Sydney, Canberra and Perth, as these areas are thickly planted with trees and the Great Black

kills the vegetation. Areas larger than European countries burn for weeks. The areas that have had recent spring rain (the Mediterranean-climate southeast of the continent) find it easier to control the fires, but human fire-setting pales beside the arson of the Black Spirals, who turn fire spirits to their side against humans and Garou. Fires start with demolitions-expert speed and can't be put out with finality. Another problem for Australia — food. Harvests are close to exhaustion, as fall is in April and May for Australia and grain supplies can't be renewed for another six months. More than northern hemisphere nations, the southern nations face shortages of food. However, plagues and floods of refugees trouble Australia and New Zealand less than Europe and North America, as they are surrounded by sea.

Carla Grimsson, leader of Australia's Get, senses quickly the prominence of the firefiends. Her detailing of Kin to fight the fires as Fenrir knock out the spirits behind them saves a large portion of the wheat crop and areas of forest. The evident madness of Inanna and the news that Cernounos has Fallen to the Wyrm with his bastard "Bunyip" disturbs the Children of Gaia badly, but most join Noirin and the other Gaian Garou in the Last Battle, led by Diem and the able Galliard Jane "Goldenfur" Peck. Soulefish, a Child of Gaia from New Zealand, leads a multitribal war pack including many Get to fight by Noirin's side. There may even be a half-dozen Mokolé of the Gumagan stream in the great battle.

Australia has a better chance of surviving the Great Black than many other nations. The question is, of course, who will greet the Sun when at last it rises again.

Battleground: The Amazon

Jungle in the dry season still stank, Steps-Lightly reflected, as he made his silent way through the forest that still kept White Father's command post from sight. Windsinger prowled, covering his rear and straining to see in the gloom that had darkened the world. Birds had shrieked for a few days after the Fall, not knowing when to fly or hunt in the endless gloom, but were silent now.

They circled a ceiba tree and entered the longhouse. The remnants of the Ghost Raptors hunched there, with two on guard outside. Steps moved to the side of his lover and squeezed hands briefly. White Father coughed, gestured to the slight man in native paint and khaki shorts who squatted with the Garou. "Trees Dream, whom you know. I'll be brief, packmates. The forest dies. Garret continues to plot attacks on Pentex facilities that the Wyrm's horde has retaken. Refugees from Brasilia and Bom Jesus are entering the forest, crossing the sertao and plantation areas. We're running short on ammunition and food, and the Wyrm doesn't sleep. You know that the despair you all feel isn't Harano: it's the Fall and the Wyrm's work. Don't follow Breath-of-Fire," and Steps shook; he had found her corpse gun still in hand. "Packmates, the Final Battle is on us. If we take out the Manicore facility, the wargs can get the DFG site. Trees tells us that Nyi and her pack are ready under Batuque Hill — let's make the Mother proud." They seized Klaives, blowpipes and spears and whooped out the door.

And stopped. Garou all, they had a keener sense of smell than humans ever could, and more than a council fire's smoke was on the breeze. "South," said Windsinger. "The great satinwood groves by the marsh."

"It will spread," said the little Mokolé in accented Garou.

The pack headed into a jungle stalked by a new foe.

The Amazon War ends as Black Spirals, Garou, fomori, First Teams and bewildered human refugees assault each other in the dying forest and across the moonscape sertao. If the Storyteller's Chronicle already concerns the Amazon War, then the Apocalypse is simply the final phase of the conflict. If the troupe's characters are elsewhere, then having them called to the Amazon would be a perfect way to make the Apocalypse story as violent and bloody as possible. Although Pentex has withdrawn in the events of pre-Apocalypse, the branch offices go independent with the Fall, and launch new attacks guided by more direct interference from the Wyrm's minions.

There are three differences between the earlier Amazon War stories chronicled in **Rage Across the Amazon** and **A World of Rage** and the finale of the War. First, the Fall means that the jungle is dying along with the cities of Brazil and Peru. Masses of refugees, who own no cold-weather clothing and no camping equipment, press into the plantation zone outside the cities, overwhelming the rural population's ability to feed or shelter them, and touching off armed conflicts in the outskirts of Rio, Sao Paulo and Recife. They then try to find shelter and food in the desert and jungle areas. The chaos and tragedy are so horrific that many Garou wish to help the humans. Sadly, there is little they can do.

Second, immense brushfires consume most of the remaining rainforest timber. Dead trees dry; fires spread and kill thousands of humans and animals. The air becomes thick with smoke and hard to breathe. Some fires come from Wyrm creatures, but humans set most of them seeking light and warmth. The conflict here should be dramatic: Garou fighting humans and Wyrm-things by the light of the world's last rainforest burning.

Third, the gloves are off. With the collapse of human government and society, the Veil is lifted. Most Garou have heard of the massacre that ended in Zhyzhak's death and of other events that make the existence of the Garou obvious to all humans. In addition, Garou of all tribes now acknowledge that humans must know of the Garou's existence. Whether to frighten humans into submission ("You're a what?") or to aid them in distress, the secret is

no longer a secret. Thus the Final Battle in the Amazon, more than in any other place, is fought in full view of "Gaia and everybody," from Brazil's and Peru's Special Forces units, arrived to aid the corporate facilities, down to the peasants and laborers whose flight from burning cities lands them on the battlefield.

The Last Caern

Loud howls Garm before Gnipahellir,
Bursting his fetters, Fenris runs:
Further in the future afar I behold
The twilight of the gods who gave victory.

— *Voluspa*, tr. W. H. Auden

Ringer growled and tightened his grip on the Klaive. Beside him Amanda made sure everyone had food, water, ammo for the Kin with Awakened automatic rifles... "Good thing we let the Get teach everyone shooting," his alpha said. "Might take out a few more of the fuckers."

"Lemme at 'em." Rich hefted a javelin. "These'll go in just fine." Behind him their Kinswoman Juana passed out medical kits. "Here we are, soldiering away, and damn all your antiwar rallies. How come you didn't protest this one?"

"This is it, man. Where are they, Joné?" Black sky stretched overhead like a lid on a jar.

The smaller woman looked at her computer-fetish handheld. "There are seventeen of them and eleven others, probably Kin, half a mile away down that draw." It had been the end of the dry season and the rains of saltwater and ice had destroyed much of the forest cover. Around the Sunset Sea Caern was a maze of oak and manzanita too soaked in storm rain to burn.

"They'll come up over that rise." She indicated what had been a tree-topped ridge before. Kin moved out to sniper posts, silver ammo dragging belts and harnesses down.

Dancer-from-the-Dance shuddered. "Dad?" Rich said. "You okay?"

The aging Garou shrugged, his patchy pelt now silvering. "They'll come no matter what I do. I had thought I might try a ruse, trick them. But it won't work. I'll just fight... go as a Garou should."

Shapes were visible among the slanting fallen trees. "Fire as the gun-spirits tell you," said Ringer, now leader as war began. "Lock and load, Children of Gaia!"

War cries split the black air as the Last Caern stood its ground.

At some point the players probably seek to bring Garou and Kin together and defend them at a caern. Wherever and whatever the caern is, for this pack it is the last caern. The attackers are numerous and their motives vary. Black Spiral Dancers seek revenge or to do the Wyrm's will by killing Gaia's Defenders, and want as many caerns as they can get. Not only do the Spirals covet the power of these sites, but they also seek

to enlarge their tribe by corruption of Gaia's defenders: they too have been unable to have Garou pups. First Teams after Pentex's destruction seek to make the darkened world "safe for humanity" through the elimination of "dangerous monsters." Vampires, in a cold dark world where their human herds die, seek potent Garou blood. Fomori, to the extent that they have a motive, want the Garou and Kin dead, and starving human mobs assault some caerns just to get food and supplies. This last opponent may prove the most disturbing of all.

When exactly the assault happens is up to the Storyteller. The first caerns fall even before the Shattering, as monsters such as Zhyzhak assault entire towns, slay and eat their victims, and perform atrocities. The Veil has ceased to be important, and Garou fight Garou openly as mortals scream and flee. Later, as Garou and Kin withdraw to caerns seeking safety, the caerns become targets for the Wyrm's hordes. The caern may be near (or on) a Final Battleground, or the assault on it may become the Final Battle, or the Garou may have the awful choice of remaining with the caern or fighting in the Final Battle.

Enemies attack caerns in person because bombs or artillery would wreck the place and make it useless to anyone who wanted it. Weapons and tactics vary from place to place, but after the Fall weapons of war are widely available. Garou should expect to face rocket launchers, assault rifles loaded with silver, grenades and gas. Specifically anti-Garou weapons (the kind that First Team members carry) are rare, lost with Pentex or saved for the Final Battle.

The Storyteller should play up the awfulness of this battle. There are no negotiations, no way to make peace. There is no retreat; this is the last last-ditch. Many (most?) of the people that the pack members knew are dead. Cities burn, forests fall; the sky blackens with debris and smoke. Food and fuel run out. Even if all the Wyrm creatures die, the sept might not make it. But they have to fight, Garou and Kin together. Some Kin, especially children, need protection, but adult Kin take up weapons and medical gear as the foe closes in.

The sept's Guardians have the easiest job: to do and die, go out and harass enemies (some First Teams or human mobs might turn back or seek softer targets if hit hard enough and fast enough) outside the bawn. The best defense is a good offense, after all. When enemies penetrate the bawn, Garou strike with Kin support and sniping. Finally, the last Guardians hold the caern center. Which posts do the players' pack take? Minor ritual officers such as the Talesinger and Truthcatcher may choose to fight with the Guardians. Note that the Talesinger is as busy as the Full Moons: there is no greater saga than this one, and there has never been a greater need for a Galliard to sing up the spirits of her pack, sept and tribe. Many Galliards are almost enraptured to be part of the Final War anticipated for so long.

Note that Kin do not share the Garou Nation's general disdain of guns. Groups such as Black Eagle and NAMID (mentioned in **Kinfolk: Unsung Heroes**) are already armed and trained. In other cases (the Bone Gnawers are a good example) Kin have no military experience but learn quickly. Kin also serve as scouts and supply/medical personnel, with Gifted Kin as leaders (the Children of Gaia are the tribe with the most Gifted Kin, but they exist in other tribes as well).

The Keeper of the Land organizes defense based on the area around the caern. Is there a forest where Garou ambushers could hide? Water or cliffs against which enemies could be pushed? How can the land's spirits, or spirit refugees, aid the sept? Is flight anywhere possible? If it is not, where is the most easily defensible position within the caern?

The Master of the Challenge may advise war leaders on strategy. If the enemies are ones that some Garou in the sept have fought before, what tactics do they prefer? There may even be last-minute gaming or betting on the outcome of the battle!

The Gatekeeper must keep a careful eye on the moon bridge, if it can be made to function at all. Who may emerge at the last minute? Friends, allies, enemies, old lovers, or refugees? What of the Gatekeeper's emissary, the Moonwalker? This cub's knowledge of other septs is valuable.

The Master of the Rite oversees defense through magic, rites and Gifts. With other Theurges, they use whatever magic can aid the sept to survive even a little longer. The Elders may ask the Master of the Rite's advice ere embarking on an Umbral Exodus. Most Masters of the Rite discourage this: fleeing does not help Gaia and Kin must remain behind. (Even if it were possible for some Kin to flee into the Shadow, many would choose to stay: what value would "life" in a spirit realm have when the world you defended is dead?)

The Elders themselves command and represent the sept. The situation is hopeless (or is it?) and the Elders know that this is the End. Nevertheless their reactions vary depending on auspice, tribe and personality. Not all Fenrir lead everyone in a last magnificent charge; not all Fianna respond with a last heroic song. They must also designate younger Garou to serve as leaders when the Elders fall: they lead, and Garou do not lead from behind.

The battle should be fierce, whatever the Storyteller intends for the player's pack. No one, friend or foe, should give less than his all. The Storyteller should keep a careful eye on how heroic the Garou are. While this may not determine whether they "survive" the End (if indeed anyone does) it says a great deal about what kind of life they may have afterwards. What use is life after the

Apocalypse for those who neither deserve it nor would be able to bear it?

There are several possible outcomes to the battle for the Last Caern, and the Storyteller should make the players' actions essential to determining what happens. Perhaps, whether or not they are the leaders at the beginning of the battle, they are the leaders at the end.

• The pack may make a heroic last stand to allow the caern to survive. If they kill enough Wyrm-things, or better yet take out a local Hive or Pit, then the caern and Kin may live. The troupe's characters all dying is not necessarily a bad ending. Garou are Gaia's Warriors, after all.

• The other Garou may all die in the Battle and leave the pack alone. Are there any Kin left to save? Are there any more potential enemies (the answer to this is usually "yes")? If there is no one left save the player's characters (or at least some of them), then they may seek the hosts of the Wyrm upon one of the Battlegrounds of the Apocalypse. They may join the Umbral Exodus, assuming that they know of it, or simply dig in and try to survive the Great Black with what resources they can muster.

• The Wyrm may win. This is a difficult story if the players survive. They may flee, but there is nowhere left to flee. The forces of the Wyrm may capture the player characters and they may try to escape, or they may try to infiltrate the enemy army and ruin its plans. A darker version of this story has the players turned (becoming Garou fomori, Black Spiral Dancers, or something even more evil) and "winning" the Apocalypse as part of the Wyrm's unholy Horde. Whatever stories may follow that one are too horrific even for this book.

This is obviously extremely nihilistic and most player groups will not like this ending. However, if this is what happens, make it clear that it was a mixture of fate (the tribe that fell, the Red Star and the Fall) and the actions of the players. It was not a totally predestined event that no one could change. Players may wish to play the game again in order to try to "win" this time.

• Help may arrive from the Umbra (a reverse Umbral Exodus) of Munchmausen, Wagnerians, Dragonriggers or other Umbral voyagers. This may save the day as the Wyrm-host attacks. It may make an Umbral exit possible, as the voyagers may have extra resources for Umbral travel. It may also mean that an Umbral flight won't work: what if the Umbral travelers have returned because the Umbra is inhospitable or fallen to the Wyrm?

• There may be a "peace treaty" of some sort after the battle has raged. This depends upon the predominant Garou tribe at the caern and the sort of opponents that they face. A mob of human refugees may agree to peace in return for sharing resources. They may even agree to care for Kin (including children and the wounded) while the Garou fight on the Battleground. Fomori or Black Spiral Dancers are going to be less reasonable, as they are entities of the Wyrm, but what if their Malfean masters are fled or dead? If the Wyrm itself is restored to balance, will its servants still be evil? Legends of Garou rites or Umbral purgatories that could cleanse a Black Spiral Dancer's taint have existed for eons. If enemies agree to be good, can Garou trust them? What if repentant fomori agree to help the caern or to aid it in attacking Pentex or the Black Spirals (after all, most fomori did not choose to be what they are)? If a First Team knows that Pentex is gone, might they turn to the Garou as a source of security in the anarchy of the Great Black? Most frighteningly, does the decimated sept have any choice but to say yes?

The Tale of the Desperate One

The Desperate One is the final monstrosity — the traitor's claw at our throats. Would that this was only another lie told by the false Garou to excuse their breaches of the Litany. But the prophets know that this creature will surely be. Who knows when or where this monster will be whelped, who will break every law we hold dear and cast us into the End of All Songs? We only know that the Unicorn's Get, the weaklings, will aid this creature.

He is the Wyrm's Chosen, but at least his allies are weak!

— Akosha's-eye, prophet of the Red Talons

The Children of Gaia have a curious prophecy of a hero who triumphs in the Apocalypse, after breaking the laws of the Litany. The identity of this hero is not clear from the prophecy.

As no other prophecy offers more than the hope of our destruction, we should seek out this hero and aid him or her. We will incur much hostility from the other Garou for doing so, but any hope of survival for Gaia is worth investigating.

Any packs that become aware of this hero's existence may decide for themselves what they wish to do, but helping him seems our best course.

May Gaia forgive us for trying to save Her.

— Benjamin Fox's-Hide, Stargazer elder

The Desperate One is our only hope, and Gaia's. Who or what breed the hero will be, no one can guess. He will be known by his deeds, not by sign or prophecy.

He will break every law of the Litany, the only Gaian Garou ever to do so.

He will triumph in the Apocalypse.

The most frightening thing about this prophecy is that it might be true.

— Cries-Havoc, Child of Gaia seer

Remembering the End

Princess-Of-Life-Over-Death finished the rite, and fastened the lid of the next-to-last mummy case in place over the sleeping Kinfolk child within. No breath would

mist the steel and glass of the casket; the girl's chest did not rise and fall. This was the Sleep of the Dragon, the beginning of a Nomad's voyage forward to no one knew what future.

If any at all. The great hall glittered in the light of a last candle, wall paintings from the First Times watching over the mummy cases where the Dragon Breed and their Kin slept. Thirty-nine filled, sealed. Arms, preserved food, the chests of jewelry and art and ancient manuscripts, the world's last Rembrandt and a quilt by Faith Ringgold; the Nomads packed well. Like a pharaoh's tomb, memories not her own prompted. Wonder who copies whom?

Would it work? No one knew. No one knew if fighting was better.

Her Garou friend sat slumped in an ancient saurian throne, his head against a carved relief of the Kings. His wounds had opened again; red stained his jacket and fatigue pants. Princess frowned. Would he live to reach other Garou? Not to reach safety; the world held none (never had, really). Even reaching what remained of his tribe would be nigh impossible.

"Brother. Here, come here." He stirred, rose slowly, came to her, stood leaning on a sarcophagus where a mother slept with two hatchlings. '

"Yeah, 'ssup?" His speech was slurred, human habits faded with pain.

"Help me here. There's one more to do." He turned to the last empty case, enameled lizard-shapes dancing on its cover. "Here, take this—" He never saw her palm the sap. One blow and he dropped.

A Garou wasn't so heavy, she mused as she laid him out groaning in the casket. The rite would work on them, she knew. It always had before, so Mnesis witnessed. The words came easily, and pain went from a half-conscious face. He would breathe again when the casket was opened. One way to get you back to your people, if any are left then. One way to get you out, brother.

She heaved the huge lid into place, fastened it. Oh, Lord Sun, she prayed, don't blame me for giving my place to him. I know Gaia can use one more warrior.

She strode to the door with its huge handles and pulled it to behind her. A woman walked down the tunnel, out the entrance; a woman set off the charges to bury the not-tomb for ages, until the Nomads emerged once more. Until the Mokolé would fly as they always had. The Mokolé, and the Garou.

A dinosaur-bird flew into the dark sky, toward the battleground. Goodbye, my family, my brother. But she knew Gaia would bless her. No matter what comes of this, no matter what world's dusk, the Mother has to be defended.

Afterword: Chessboards in the Grass

I see Earth rising a second time
Out of the foam, fair and green;
Down from the fells fish to capture,
Wings the eagle; waters flow.
Boards shall be found of a beauty to wonder at,
Boards of gold in the grass long after,
The chessboards they owned in the olden days,
— *Voluspa*, tr. W.H. Auden

The nature of the world after the Last Battle depends on the ending chosen by the Storyteller and achieved by the players. Three endings appear here, one for each of the Triat; a fourth ending reflects the heroic world of **Exalted** and much post-apocalyptic science fiction. While the Storyteller has to choose which ending she wishes to use, and whether she continues the chronicle after the End, these serve as useful guidelines.

The Wyld's Ending

The characters find, if they can return to Earth, that the impact of Rorg and Luna has caused a mass extinction, a "Wonderwork." Most humans and large animals are dead, along with Garou and Kin. In fact, the majority of living Garou are probably the few survivors of the Last Battle.

Human civilization no longer exists outside a few refuges, which won't last forever. The world, damaged as it is, returns to nature.

The creatures of the Wyrm fare poorly. Garou and Kin kill most fomori and Black Spiral Dancers; fomori and other evil creatures no longer have the matrix of human society to support them. The Wyrm itself does not die (chaos never dies) but loses all power to do harm; the Maeljin are dead and Malfeas destroyed. It is possible that an amputated remnant of the Wyrm returns to its role as the Balancer or the Dissolver, as it seems to have done after the last Wonderwork (according to the Mokolé, anyway).

Gaia is alive, though extremely weak. Generations of ritual and sacrifice will barely return her to consciousness, even if the Balance of the Triat is restored and maintained.

Vampires and Ananasi die of thirst (save for a few lost in torpor or sealed in concrete). The Rokea are the most prosperous shapeshifters, but have no interest in any activity on land. Most Rokea slews engage in mysterious activity regarding the pieces of meteorite that fell to the sea floor. A few Mokolé sleep through the disaster. Other Changers, including the Gurahl, keep their stations.

The troupe's pack finds it hard to survive; homids mourn the deaths of almost all their kind, while lupus have trouble finding either prey or mates. The Wyld world seems harsh to many, but slowly returns to a balanced whole.

The Weaver's Ending

The world may live, bereft of spirit. Earth recovers slowly from the impact of the huge asteroid-like chunks of Rorg and Luna. Virtually no supernatural creatures remain; the Gauntlet is almost impassable (9+) and Garou huddle in Umbral realms. Other supernatural beings are mostly gone as well: Wyrm-things in the Last Battle, Wyld-things in the Great Black from starvation, cold and plagues. The Wyrm itself is so crippled that it probably functions mostly as a force of balance again — the Furies' sacrifice and the Ananasi assault has destroyed much of its power to corrupt and kill. Vampires die once humans, their food source, do so; Gaian shifters mostly die trying to defend Gaia, who no longer exists save as a scholars' metaphor for the interconnectedness of life. Spirits, if any still exist, are dispersed or asleep; Gifts lose most of their power and Garou cannot get more Rage from Luna. It's also almost impossible to learn new Gifts (no one is left to teach them). The world operates according to science. Magic is dying or dead.

Garou in this world mostly no longer Change. Homids return to being humans, with "wolf souls" and an intense love for the wild; lupus are "wise wolves". Metis, if still alive, may become humans or wolves for the rest of their lives, or remain in Crinos, Hispo or Glabro form almost permanently.

Garou Change only at times when it is of the greatest possible importance, and even then must spend 1 permanent Rage to Change. The former Changers now take the name Theroi, or "beasts" in Greek, and they and their descendents are humans with animal souls, or animals with human souls. This is a sad world, but not an utter tragedy.

The Machine Messiah is very important in this spider-webbed world, as it is one of a few computers to still function normally, as well as an Earthly incarnation of a powerful spirit with many well-armed Garou followers. The spiritual side of the Messiah may fade, leaving it a powerful AI with a private army of sorts.

The Weaver's ending leaves some humans and animals alive in the possibility of growth, life and renewal. Stories set here would be like those in our own (non-magical) world, with the memory of the lost Mother, Gaia.

The Wyrm's Ending

That will be the age when justice is banished, when innocence is despised and the evil ones drag away good men as their prey.

— Oracle of Hystaspes

The Weaver's Ending and the Wyld's, although grim, are the "happy" endings to the story of Ragnarok. It is also possible that the Wyrm could win, as it and its minions plan to. This results from the victory of the Wyrm's Horde on the Last Battlefield or from the players losing the Last Caern. It could also be the result of cowardice: the players and other Garou seek a "refuge" or attempt to join an Umbral Exodus instead of defending the Mother. Finally, the Wyrm could win because of previous actions by Garou: it may be that captured Garou warriors have given away secrets under torture, or that Dancer Ronin acted as spies; perhaps Kin that defected enabled the Wyrm to learn strategic secrets, or it may be that human evil strengthened the Wyrm to the point that no Gaian force could withstand it. Whatever the cause, the Horde may win, and the Gaians lose.

The Storyteller must handle this choice carefully. At all times, the "it's over, you can't win," and the "it's over; you lose/suck" ideas should never be part of the game. Storytellers need to remind players of their own importance. Even if cliath, they should be assigned a quest of surprising importance; no elders are available. Small hands, as Tolkein said, turn the wheels of the world because they must. More experienced packs ought to have major responsibilities: destroying powerful Wyrm weapons, killing the leaders of the dark forces, recovering Gaian lore and arms for the Battle. If the players' Garou are elders, they lead in the Last Battle. At all times, the characters' actions should make a visible difference. Even if the Storyteller has already decided that the Wyrm wins, the players should have a chance to make heroes of themselves and to change the course of history.

The Wyrm's victory is the world's ruin. Life continues, but horribly changed: a land covered with toxin-resistant weeds and dead trees, vermin and pests where larger animals have died, humans scrabbling, stealing, murdering and eating each other to live, or worse yet, serving the Wyrm-Lords openly for their daily "bread." If the troupe's characters live to see this horror, make it obvious that this is not simply a "regime change." It is the death of Gaia, and the corruption of all upon Her corpse to the service of hate and filth.

The Hordes of the Wyrm re-establish civilization wherever there are enough humans to form a workforce. Whether humans are Mordor-like slaves or receive "wages" from some Pentex successor is up to the Storyteller. These workers live and die in a setting full of toxic chemicals, empty of beauty and joy. It is made clear to them that the world needs generations of labor to recover from the damage that the "monsters" (Garou and so on) inflicted. Humans resent the overlords, but resistance brings torture and public execution for offenders and their families, and so few protest. In the world after the Fall, any offer of food and shelter is enough to bring workers into these societies, which they never leave. S. M. Stirling's tales of the Domination of the Draka paint one picture of a high-tech slave society, and there are others.

The Gauntlet is high and Black Spiral Dancers patrol the Penumbra ceaselessly; remaining Garou in the Umbra fade away into ghosts. Garou on Earth die one by one as all "refuges" fall to the new order. Kin are saved and taken to Hives to breed Black Spiral Dancers; fertile Kin can expect long, unpleasant lives. Stories of the "Garou Resistance" should be heroic and depressing. The French Resistance were heroes, but only because they were rescued from outside. No such rescue is likely for the remnant of Garou and Kin on Gaia's corpse.

This chronicle probably ends with all the troupe's pack dying as heroes or refugees. More depressing would be to have them surrender, if the Dark One will have them. While life as a Wyrm-Lord would never have a dull moment, it would be beyond the scope of this chapter.

The World Aflame

These three endings are not the only possible ones. The Beast Courts of the Orient, including the Stargazers and other hengeyokai, have long seen time as cyclical, and the world as a turning wheel. The end, to some, seems to others the beginning.

Long ago, there was an age of "exalted" war and adventure in what some call the Second Age of Man and others the Hero Time. Or perhaps — perhaps this was in fact not the Fifth Age, but the First. It may be that what remains after the Last Battle partakes not solely of the Weaver, the Wyld or the Wyrm, but of all three. The following is merely a sketch of this future-past.

Garou, Kin and other Changers survive "after a judgment day", and so do creatures of the Wyrm. Some spirits and animals still live after the Great Black and spread rapidly, based around the impact sites of the Shards. Survivors form civilizations centered on available city and harbor sites. Higher technology would be slow to develop or absent because of the difficulty of recovering materials and skills for industry. At best, the survivors could hope for a "scrap-iron age" and a world like that of the Pelbar or Horseclans novels, *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, Hiero Desteen, or even Thundarr the Barbarian. Garou have much to do in this world: allying with or opposing new human states, founding Garou tribes, battling the Wyrm and what nightmares may rise from the poisoned world, and caring for a reborn Mother Gaia.

And every power of heaven shall be melted, and the heaven shall be rolled up like a book, and all the stars shall fall like leaves from the vine, and as the leaves from the fig-tree.

— Apocalypse of Peter

B. LEBLANC
03

Chapter Six: The Last Tales

No Regrets, No Mercy

The Apocalypse is the end for the Garou. It's not the stuff of second chances. Gaia doesn't appear at the end of all things and tell everyone it was just a dream. This is the time of legends, the coming of Ragnarok, the Final Days. It is a time of great deeds and greater glory, the culmination of the underlying themes of **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**.

Ending a chronicle isn't easy. Even after the final curtain falls, fond memories tempt Storytellers to revisit the past. With the Apocalypse, there is a definite sense of finality — the world itself no longer exists. Revisiting a group of favorite characters isn't an option. An end must come.

Most published storytelling advice concerns setting or chronicle creation, but this chapter addresses how to plan for the end and how to handle the aftermath. Setting the stage for the end is a large part of the process, as is how to close the book on a chronicle.

With the Apocalypse, there is no room for regret. The world changes forever. Earth may not survive. How can players triumph in a doomed world? How can they avoid feeling railroaded in a game ending with certain tragedy? If the fate of Gaia is sealed, then why should the Garou struggle?

The Apocalypse haunts all **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** chronicles, but when each individual stands at the end of time, they must face their inner doubts. In a good chronicle, characters should never completely lose hope. Survival may or may not be possible, but even in some small way, the Garou make a difference.

Conclusions

An Apocalypse chronicle arguably demands more attention than the chronicle with no fixed ending. In any chronicle, everyone involved receives a greater satisfaction when a story comes to an end. No one likes to read or watch half a story and never know the finale. Some people are so interested in the endings of books that they flip straight to the final chapter before starting their novel. Leaving a chronicle unfinished leaves everyone unsatisfied.

Chronicles can be episodic, stories connected only loosely, perhaps with recurring characters or settings. Chronicles can also be ongoing epics where each story fits as a chapter into the larger plot. Apocalypse games lend themselves to the latter, as ultimately, the chronicle comes to a climax and a conclusion with the end of the Apocalypse.

All experienced players have joined games that never came to a fitting conclusion. The group may have split up due to out of game issues or because boredom set in. Characters achieved their personal

goals, and players lost their motivations. Many times, games continue over the course of years sustained by a sense of pride and loyalty to the characters or by the sheer will of the Storyteller. However, the longer a chronicle lasts without an end point, the more likely it is to fall apart without an ending. Even a badly thought out conclusion works better than no conclusion.

Running a chronicle with a definite plot and an obvious climax helps to prevent a chronicle from losing focus. As the Apocalypse churns to its end, the main plot of the chronicle will reach its conclusion. With the Apocalypse looming or taking place in the background, every moment is precious.

The Storyteller must realize that each character has her own story. Players crave the opportunity to resolve their character's issues, to complete that character's development and story as part of the chronicle. As much as possible, the resolution of a character's personal subplots should coincide with the conclusion of the main plotline. This may happen before the Garou go off to fight their last battle, as an Ahroun finds inner peace before committing an act of self-sacrifice to save his pack. It could happen in the final conflict when a young werewolf overcomes his fear of a Black Spiral Dancer to face down the beast that grievously wounded him. A character's story may conclude after the last battle, as a Philodox gains a true understanding of the sacrifices of generations of Garou on the final day of conflict.

Strong endings make strong chronicles, which will be remembered for years. To craft such an ambitious final story for the Apocalypse, a Storyteller must start with the beginning. Although every Apocalypse chronicle shares themes, moods and events, each tale of the end is unique.

Welcome to Apocalypse

What if you currently have a successful ongoing chronicle, but desperately want to experience the end of the world? Adding the Apocalypse to an existing chronicle gives a Storyteller many advantages over starting a purely "Apocalypse" game.

First and foremost, there's the surprise factor. Although the thought that a player's favorite werewolf has to face the end times may shock them, the Storyteller doesn't have to deal with players creating fatalistic war machines with personalities and statistics designed solely to fight the final battle. Surprise is the hardest emotion to fake. When players realize that they are playing **Werewolf: THE APOCALYPSE**, the reactions should be priceless.

Secondly, an existing chronicle carries a wealth of information and background from the existing setting and completed stories. Imagine how your Storyteller characters, both heroes and villains, react when they learn that the Apocalypse has arrived. Do villains repent, desperately seeking salvation when they realize the horror they've wrought? Do reliable allies suddenly go insane when they learn the world is coming to an end or decide to embark on a sudden display of hedonism? Does the Litany hold up during the Apocalypse?

Current plotlines change with the coming of the Apocalypse. Just because it's possible to run the end of all things, doesn't mean that it's the best option. Consider the current plot of the chronicle and the players' enjoyment of it before throwing the players into the fires of the final days. Rather than starting the Apocalypse in mid-chronicle, a Storyteller could successfully complete his current chronicle first and then revisit it as a new chronicle with the Apocalypse.

A Hint of Madness

When the various supporting cast of a chronicle, protagonists and adversaries alike, learn that the end of the world has arrived, most of them do not take things well. Those with high Willpower scores and strong levels of Gnosis have the easiest time adapting, but many snap with the realization that the end is nigh.

The first reaction of most to the news of the Apocalypse should be denial. Without strong evidence, even mystically oriented Garou might not accept the fact that the end of the world has arrived. They may need time to take in the reality of the situation. Even then, Storyteller characters may pester player characters about possible "solutions" to the problem.

The next reaction should be rage or despair, depending on the personality. If a Storyteller character has a high Rage score, he may go berserk, injuring close friends or family and causing some collateral property damage. A character with low Rage and Willpower may fall into despair or even Harano. A Storyteller character with a high Willpower may cling to the hope that he can make a difference, while a character with high Gnosis may fall into despair as he senses the dying of Gaia.

Finally, the Storyteller characters should resign themselves to some level of acceptance. Some are quite stable, while others stay on the edge of madness. News of the Apocalypse causes personality changes. Reliable friends may become unstable psychopaths. Some characters may strive to become better people. Many turn to religion, dutifully looking for signs and salvation.

Themes

Most traditions have versions of the end of the world. Death is part of the natural order, and just as individuals must pass on, even the Earth has its own finite lifespan. In **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**, the end has a special significance. This is the time that the Garou have foreseen and dreaded throughout the modern age. They have put their efforts towards struggling against the Apocalypse and preparing themselves to kill their enemies during the final battle.

Two sets of themes should dominate an Apocalypse chronicle. First, an impending sense of doom and a desperate attempt to make every second count. The werewolves should realize how precious the time and experiences they have truly are. If they don't take advantage of every moment to fight the Wyrm, then all may be lost. On the other hand, if they don't take time to appreciate the world around them, then they may lose their last chance to cherish the wonders of Gaia. Survival is essential, both for the body and the soul.

Second, the Apocalypse is the time of heroes. Prophecies come true. Secrets are revealed. Everyone looks for the revelation of secrets and finds hidden meanings in the world around them. Werewolves seek champions from their myths and legends. The slaying of a fomor may be a triumph before the time of the Apocalypse, but during the dark days, such a deed may mark a werewolf as a reborn king or queen. The potential for greatness lies with every action and every word.

Scales

The Apocalypse is a grand cosmic event, shattering the fabric of the universe. The entire framework of reality shudders as the Apocalypse occurs. Reality is a big place. No story can hope to encompass the entire end of the world. Each Storyteller must decide to what extent her chronicle focuses on the end. Not all werewolves need to be involved in central events to have strong poignant stories.

In some chronicles, the actions of werewolves may have no bearing on the ultimate events of the Apocalypse. The end of the world is part of the setting, the backdrop upon which the Garou struggle for their personal goals. Knowledge of the end is enough to create an emotionally charged atmosphere, which forms a crucible for character development.

Space

A Storyteller must decide how much territory she wishes to cover in her chronicle. Does the chronicle range across the bounds of a single protectorate? Or does it spread over a country or even across continents? What role does the Umbra play? The Apocalypse is a worldwide happening, and the larger an area covered in a chronicle, the more factors a Storyteller must consider. Do minions of the Wyrm want to tear down the Eiffel Tower? If the player characters never go to France, the question is unimportant.

Local

Running a local chronicle means limiting the setting to a single area, such as a city or caern. By keeping the setting familiar, players can easily envision their characters' surroundings. The meaning of impending or continuous destruction really strikes home when players know the characters involved. When the Apocalypse threatens their home caern or their Kinfolk, the plot immediately becomes personal. This type of setting lends itself to detailed Storyteller characters and intense roleplaying. Many movies about the end of the world focus on a small town and its inhabitants as the world blows up around them.

Regional

A regional setting stretches its bounds beyond those of a single caern, encompassing a few cities or the bounds of an entire protectorate. Regional chronicles allow a Storyteller to pull in big guns, having powerful leaders of the Garou appear, running large gatherings of septs and having devastating events occur without destroying the entire setting. For example, in a regional chronicle, an asteroid could destroy a small city as a harbinger of things to come. A regional setting may take Garou into the Near Realms of the Umbra. These settings still revolve around a local base of operations, such as a single caern. These chronicles keep much of the intense roleplaying and strong connections to local contacts, while allowing the group a bit more freedom to explore and change the pace of the game.

Global

This setting works best for powerful werewolves. In this case, characters travel around the world to witness signs of the Apocalypse and battle the Wyrm's minions. A global chronicle involves events and locales of great significance, such as the destruction of Pyramids of Giza, the despoiling of the Grand Canyon or the Kraken rising from the Marianas Trench. Characters may experience natural disasters on the scale of countries or continents. This large setting doesn't allow the characters to set down roots or connect as much with their environment.

Universal

A universal setting takes the chronicle to the limits. This may involve parallel stories set across different times, the Deep Umbra, the entire Earth, the moon

itself and anywhere else a Storyteller can think to take a **Werewolf** chronicle. There is no telling where a character might end up. Werewolves in this chronicle bond as a pack, simply because they won't have chances to build other attachments. Giving the pack a strong mentor or a Storyteller character packmate is highly recommended so the Storyteller can offer advice in pack decisions (when asked), as the player characters lack an outside support network. This setting can become the stuff of high fantasy, an epic worthy of song as the Garou go to the ends of the spiritual and physical worlds to triumph during the Apocalypse.

Importance

Once the Storyteller decides on the scope of her setting, she needs to settle on the importance of the role the characters play in the Apocalypse. Deciding on the role of the troupe's pack defines the environment and Storyteller characters as well as the power level of player's characters, and how much their actions affect the Apocalypse.

Most people like shouldering responsibility until things go wrong. For some players, the pressure of having to stop the Apocalypse may prevent them from enjoying the chronicle. Few players or their characters want to live with a mistake that destroyed Gaia. When judging how important to make the player's pack, a Storyteller must keep her players' desires in mind. A good way to find out what a player wants is to ask during character creation, "What are this character's ambitions and goals?" If the player says his character wants to shift into lupus and roam free through the forest, then that character probably shouldn't have to organize a military platoon or a political function.

Vital

In a vital role, the characters directly take part in the focal events of the Apocalypse. They are the heroes of prophecy, the ones whose deeds reshape the world. They travel to the lair of the Wyrm and face its mightiest warriors. They call and conduct gatherings of Garou. They receive the visions of the future and hear voices of prophecy.

This can be the most rewarding way to run an Apocalypse chronicle. The players are always at the center of the action. The story of the Apocalypse is the story of the characters. They are the movers and the shakers, the decision makers for the Garou nation and the ultimate heroes of legend. Other characters look to them for leadership during the dark days of the Apocalypse.

Making the characters absolutely vital places a heavy burden on them. Their choices and decisions shape the course of the end of the world. Each mistake has consequences, costing lives and spirits. The players must be willing to make the hard decisions. If the pack is torn with indecision, game sessions could degenerate into long debates over what courses of action to take. If the group has too much dissension, this could ruin the fun of the game.

Nonetheless, making the characters vital to the storyline goes to the heart of storytelling. With your players, you are creating a modern myth. Experiencing the end of the world, a universal story told in countless myths and religions, from the front lines is something that no one should forget.

Although you can certainly make a less powerful pack vital to the overall scheme, for full effect the characters can be rank 5 and the reincarnations of heroes of legend, possibly with multiple dots in Ancestors. When running this type of chronicle, unique Gifts with abilities beyond those of rank 5 should be accessible to the werewolves, and destiny should overrule the game system as needed. This doesn't mean that the characters can't fail — only that they won't fail due to an arbitrarily random dice roll.

Significant

Making the characters significant instead of vital diminishes their personal glory a bit, but it also eases the pressure and stress on them. In this chronicle, the characters are not the only hope. They play a major role and stand on the front lines, but Storyteller characters, such as King Albrecht, come to their aid at the end of the day if necessary. They aren't the only ones directing the final battle. The role they play depends on them, but unlike the vital chronicle where they are almost forced into becoming heroes, they have much more choice in a significant chronicle.

In many ways, this provides a good compromise between making the characters vital to the storyline and leaving them on the sidelines during the Apocalypse. By providing strong characters to back up or even lead the players' characters, the Storyteller gives the players more leeway to make their own choices as to how to handle the Apocalypse. Depending on the players, the pack may choose to focus on a specific mission or rise to the challenge of leading the werewolves in a desperate attempt to save Gaia.

Role to Play

In the Apocalypse, the Garou marshal all of their forces in the Final Battle with the Wyrm. This chronicle gives the characters a specific mission and a role to play in the greater war. This level of character importance works well with a smaller setting scope, although that's not essential. Instead of attempting to defeat the Wyrm, they may have to destroy a particularly loathsome Nexus Crawler or a hive of Black Spiral Dancers.

They are soldiers with their battlefield assignment in a much greater war.

This type of chronicle allows the Storyteller to make the Apocalypse much more personal for the werewolves. Fighting the Wyrm is one thing, but the Wyrm is a vast nebulous entity. Battling Kythak the Accursed, the Black Spiral Dancer who once led your caern before he fell adds a strong connection to the events of the Apocalypse.

This doesn't mean that the Storyteller must ignore other aspects of the Apocalypse. In fact, having spirits tell stories of the great struggles transpiring across the world and through the Umbra makes the characters' own conflict that much more important. Perhaps they can't save the entire world, but at least, they can defend their small part, perhaps serving as a symbol of hope to other packs.

Spectators

Finally, the characters could just watch the end come. In this case, the pack doesn't have a mission or a role to play in the grand scheme of things. Instead, they try to live their lives as the Apocalypse comes crashing down around them.

This is the type of role most characters play in disaster movies, such as *Titanic*. In this case, the focus should be on personal development and personal plotlines. Other characters may know about the Apocalypse or be completely ignorant. When the signs of the Apocalypse begin, the werewolves may not understand them or just ignore them. At first, they may just seem like red herrings or window dressing. Some packs may choose to involve themselves. Over time, the chronicle begins to focus on personal stories and the struggle for survival. This type of chronicle appeals to more mature players who may enjoy the humble scale and simple motivation of survival.

Characters could be young werewolves, recently Changed in this chronicle, possibly tied to a small or remote caern.

Intensity

Once you've decided the scope of your setting and the importance of the characters to the Apocalypse, gauging the intensity level of the chronicle helps you decide what stories to create. When you plan your chronicle, consider your players. If you have younger or inexperienced players in your group, you want to run a game with fewer adult situations. You shouldn't feel the need to include graphic descriptions or use sex, language and gratuitous violence in order to make a chronicle "cool".

The nature of an Apocalypse chronicle forces characters to confront horrific events and places them in dark situations. The environment and the sense of impeding doom increase the intensity level. Even the best Storytellers should evaluate how circumstances might change in a chronicle from how things have been to where they are going. Without any changes other than introducing the Apocalypse, players may

Creating Powerful Garou Characters

In order to run a **Werewolf** game set during the Apocalypse, players may need to have extraordinarily powerful Garou. Normal character creation doesn't cover how to make these werewolves. **Werewolf Storytellers Handbook** has a system for creating veteran Garou in detail on pg. 52. For a quick and dirty set of methods, here are three other options.

First, the Storyteller can just grant everyone extra freebie points at character creation. Giving characters one and a half times the starting allocation of dots and doubling or tripling starting freebie points should allow for the creation of extremely powerful characters quickly. The downside to this method is that the players may not create well-rounded Garou, instead focusing on using min/max techniques to make extremely effective Garou.

Second, everyone can create characters for the chronicle using the standard rules in the main rulebook. Afterward, the Storyteller can give out experience points in small doses, five to ten points at a time, and have everyone spend or save them to create the characters. This method takes some time, but it leads to the creation of more well-balanced characters. Also, players have a better understanding of how the character developed, since they have to make decisions while "experiencing" their werewolf.

Finally, the quick and dirty method is to simply assign values, requiring players to describe their character concept and create a mutually agreeable Garou. Characters created this way have the abilities and attributes to perform as the player desires, but in a pack, some may prove unbalanced. If the assigned attributes and abilities don't satisfy a player's concept or seem inadequate compared to other members of her group, she may grow upset.

In addition, a simple way to empower werewolves would be to give them special Backgrounds, such as six or seven dots of Ancestors or a fetish of grand relic status. This tactic works well to help existing characters play a part in the Apocalypse without accelerating their experience gains too much.

become depressed as they learn that their favorite character is going to die (or so they may believe). When they realize that a chronicle in which they've invested time and energy to help create and enjoyed experiencing is going to end, they may experience a definite change in their outlook. Sometimes, the best option for a Storyteller might be to reduce the intensity level of her chronicle, with the thought in mind that characters will have a hard enough time accepting and dealing with the Apocalypse.

On the other hand, the Apocalypse provides the opportunity to shift styles of play. If a group desires to spend more time doing intense roleplaying and less time killing Black Spiral Dancers, the advent of the Apocalypse makes a good excuse. Raising the intensity level can make the chronicle more engaging and creative for everyone involved.

Standard

This level of description and situations works for most gamers. Controversial subjects, such as child abuse, homosexuality, abortion, religion and politics take a backstage role in this chronicle. Bedroom scenes occur "off screen." Violence exists, but not detailed graphic violence. Body parts don't litter a battle scene; instead the survivors have bloody claw marks on them. When in doubt or playing with inexperienced gamers, this is a good starting point. Keep the focus on moving the plotline and good solid drama. A standard game presents a primarily black and white world. Moral dilemmas are rare in this game. It's possible that some players may want to stray into more restricted areas. These players should be handled carefully so they don't disrupt the group. If the Storyteller is comfortable with the idea, the occasional solo session may provide these players with the more intense scenes they desire.

Edgy

An edgy chronicle uses language, violence, sexual instances and many morally challenging scenarios. Playing this game involves fight scenes with shattering ribs, disemboweling, and heavy firepower turning Garou into crimson 3-D graffiti. A Storyteller running this chronicle knows that he may gross some players out or test their sensibilities, but has enough confidence to run his game without fear. Gray areas are much broader, with characters put in situations where they have to weigh the lesser of two evils. The protagonists may be as dangerous as the villains they oppose. Most chronicles hover around this level of intensity.

No Limits

For mature groups only, this style of play leaves nothing to the imagination. Bestiality, cannibalism, rape and gruesome death scenes combine with religious sacrilege and moral ambiguity at this level of intensity. Nothing is sacred in this sort of game, and players may come away with their senses offended.

The Storyteller must be comfortable with her own mores and ethics and those of her players. The subject material runs the risk of embarrassing or offending the players. Characters may react in an uninhibited and possibly disturbing manner. Although this chronicle allows great freedom of plot, the Storyteller must remain aware of the intensity of each scene. Players may attempt to out-gross or out-sicken each other or the Storyteller.

Taking breaks is highly recommended in this type of chronicle after emotionally charged scenes. It's okay to run a scene that leaves all the players in the room and their characters disturbed, but it's not fair to follow up with a bright and cheery scene the next morning. Likewise, the Storyteller may need some air to recover from a particularly intimate or intense scene.

Players are encouraged to keep journals for their characters after these sessions to give themselves and the Storyteller insights into their feelings. Some players may wish to have solos or events happen through notes or e-mails between sessions to help resolve matters. Questions after the end of a session are good for clearing the air and laying the groundwork for future stories.

A game with no limits requires a great deal of responsibility among all members of a gaming group. If a member can't handle certain scenes, the Storyteller should respect that and tone down those aspects of the chronicle. If a player suffered abuse as a child, placing them within or forcing them to witness a scene of violent child abuse is irresponsible and inexcusable. Also, just because anything goes, doesn't mean that everything must happen "on screen." It's not the dark that we fear, but what lurks unseen in the dark.

Tribal Differences

Each Garou tribe has a different view of the world, their role within it and the Apocalypse. When running the Apocalypse, keep in mind the tribes to which the characters belong. If everyone plays a Get of Fenris, then the Storyteller should get ready to run full-scale Ragnarok, and legends about Silver Fang kings become largely inconsequential.

No matter what tribes the players choose for their characters, the Storyteller should justify that tribe's beliefs in the chronicle. No group of werewolves should have everything they believe turn out to be the truth, but neither should everything they believe be wrong. Mixing elements of tribal beliefs into one grand vision of destruction should satisfy both the players and the Storyteller.

Personalizing Chronicles

No matter the scope or scale or rating of a chronicle, the best chronicles have a personal aspect to them. The more individual meaning a chronicle holds, the more deeply players can involve themselves, and ultimately, the more satisfaction they receive when they triumph.

Every player creates a character with a vision in mind. Some detail their vision of the character with long backgrounds, detailed histories for supporting characters in their lives, and a plethora of trivia for a Storyteller to digest. Other players just choose the dots for their character's traits and quietly come up with a name and a description. However, even a player that only writes up their character sheet gives the Storyteller information. Most of these personal ambitions are obvious, but a Storyteller should take the time to review them.

Players want their characters to use the abilities that they've given them. A player who creates an Ahroun with five dots in Brawl may not have fun in a chronicle with no combat. A Theurge needs spirits with which to interact. Black Furies desire at least some opportunity to defend women or children. Children of Gaia want a chance to alleviate suffering. Lupus are particularly interested in the final fate of the wilderness. It's important to give the players the opportunities and challenges within the plot to use their abilities.

By the same token, as time progresses, characters develop personalities and dreams and ambitions brought on by roleplaying. These may be as simplistic as wanting revenge on the Get of Fenris who gave him a battle scar, or as convoluted as untangling a five-way illicit love affair involving multiple violations of the Litany.

Fill in the Blanks

Filling in the scenes of a chronicle with recurring characters from character histories is essential to a well-run Apocalypse game. Taking events and moving them to familiar locales and settings is another simple but effective tool, as long as the Storyteller is careful to research his locations. For example, if your group lives near Charlotte then having that city become ground zero for a meteor impact is more effective than having Los Angeles destroyed by an earthquake.

Experienced Storytellers all know how to fill in the blanks when using pre-published material. Transposing events of the Apocalypse to known characters and settings doesn't take a great deal of creativity, just a bit of preparation. For the Apocalypse, however, a Storyteller should consider taking personalization of the chronicle material a step further — create events in the Apocalypse based solely on the characters and settings in her chronicle.

As you create your own characters, decide how they fit into world events. If your troupe goes to the Amazon to settle the War of Rage, where you fill in some blanks with your own supporting cast, then consider what diabolic plots enemies back home could be arranging. Have the werewolves return home from the jungle to discover their Kinfolk as part of a cult. Remember too that in desperate times characters could be capable of anything. What would most people do if they knew there was no tomorrow? What happens to the facades of civilized life? Even wolves may act strangely, fighting for alpha status in packs because they know that they won't have months or years to wait for the alpha to go gray for their challenge.

Be willing to push the boundaries of the Apocalypse. If you love tidal waves, set off a few as a sign of the end. Perhaps the Kraken rises from the depths as the old crazy Uktena claimed he would years ago. Don't limit yourself. This is it, time for no holds barred storytelling. With the end of the world, you can reshape reality completely without worrying about the long-term repercussions or plausibility issues.

Loose Threads

The most important part of an Apocalypse chronicle are the subplots of the characters. You can never wrap up all the loose ends in a chronicle. You have to address each individual character's subplots. In addition, you want to bring together as much of the chronicle as possible in the end. Gather the supporting cast or at the least, reveal their final fates. They don't all have to be terrible. Kinfolk might flee with the children of a werewolf to the mountains, if the mountains are destined to survive. Other Garou characters may die in battles, or fight side by side with the players' pack in the final conflict. Rivalries need resolution as well.

The Greatest, Most Awesome Everything

When running an Apocalypse chronicle, everything grows bigger and more dramatic. The combatants have greater powers. Actions carry more meaning. The consequences of victory and defeat are final.

Storytellers must watch themselves and their descriptions of events. Every story can't be the ultimate battle, even in a chronicle about the Apocalypse. If antagonists are constantly outdoing each other in progressive stories and every fight is a desperate last chance struggle against the odds, then players may grow jaded.

A good Storyteller does not tell his players how important a scene is, but instead, he uses his descriptions to allow them to draw their own conclusions. The difference is subtle, but important. Show, don't tell. If a Storyteller coats every scene in melodrama, then when the characters reach the true climax of the chronicle, the players may yawn from boredom.

Impact

In **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**, death is not the ultimate punishment for a player. With any type of game that emphasizes character development, killing a character is a loss, but it also means that the Storyteller and player must start over to create a strong storyline for the new character. Now, this doesn't mean that a Storyteller should shrink from killing a character if it's deserved, but there are other measures to bring home the horror of the Apocalypse and encourage character development.

Killing Storyteller characters can impact the players' characters, especially when the deceased were important to them. When the noble leader of the caern, a figure that served as a mentor to a member of the pack, dies horrifically, then characters go on edge. One thing to consider when deciding who lives and who dies in this time of carnage is how the plot of a movie or TV show would tend to run. In horror movies, some characters, usually the targets of the monster, tend to live, while everyone else becomes a victim. If you kill off a character that most people would assume should live, like a love interest, that drives home the Apocalypse. Nothing should be sacred.

Destroying a major part of the setting works as well. The pack's home caern could lose its spiritual power. Perhaps a Bane devours the caern spirit itself. The loss of a caern can have a major impact. Anything that is part and parcel of the characters' daily lives becomes free game. If werewolves gather at a Kinfolk's home in their homid forms every Sunday to forget the savagery of their other lives, imagine their reaction when they discover the house burned to the ground. Their Kinfolk ally is not dead, but in a hospital burned over 90% of his body with strange "chemical" burns that not even Mother's Touch can heal.

Finally, scarring a Garou or destroying a fetish can have the same type of impact. If a grand klaive once wielded by the King of the Silver Fangs even shows a crack in the blade, it might be enough to have a noble Fang ready to jump off the nearest cliff. Wounds that do not heal, possibly maiming a werewolf, impact a character. Losing Gifts or even worse, the ability to use Rage or Gnosis makes even the hardest werewolf take notice. Imagine the night of a lunar eclipse in which werewolves cannot change forms.

With any of these impacts, it's important to gauge the reaction of the characters and players involved. A player may be able to roleplay these tragedies perfectly, but if he gets tired of the chronicle because all of his love interests keep getting devoured, then you've gone too far. On the

other hand, sometimes a player plays a brooding Garou on the verge of Harano after too many tragedies.

The secret is to be unpredictable, yet plausible. Every tragedy must make sense on some level. Once you've achieved a comfortable level of shock and horror, enough to make a player's adrenaline rush when her character hears a noise in an empty building or doesn't hear a howl of greeting from a favorite ally, don't push the personal envelope any further. Also, remember that too many tragedies only make characters and players jaded. If they stop caring about what happens, you've lost the power of the chronicle. Any of the incidents described should be a major event, worthy of at least a session and perhaps a story in its own right.

Incorporating Signs and Omens

Portents and signs have foretold the coming of the end since humans could first understand them. The Apocalypse is this time of legend, the culmination of millennia. The Apocalypse marks the end of prophecy, the end of history and the end of time. There are no visions of the times after the Apocalypse; this event is the final chapter, a curtain beyond which no fortune-teller can see. Even Gaia cannot be certain of the outcome of the Apocalypse. Although some prophecies may call for a golden age, they only speak of it in hints and vague references, and for each one with a bright hope, another tale ends in chaos and destruction.

Without signs of the impending doom, the Garou would not know about the Apocalypse. Werewolves might unite and struggle against terrible cataclysms, yet the true impact and horror of the events only unfold as they realize that they live in a time of prophecy. As each omen and portent reveals its meaning, the impact of the Apocalypse drives itself home.

Using Published Prophecy

Several products, including **Rage Across the Heavens** and **The Silver Record** include prophecies, omens and signs of the Apocalypse. Storytellers should consider borrowing parts of these prophecies and adapting them to fit their chronicles. Like all published game material, this saves time and energy, but they should have some particular relevance to the chronicle for maximum effect. Writing down quotes from these books or photocopying prophecies for easy reference during a game makes players pay more attention than reading them out of book.

Effective Omens

Omens or signs are usually supernatural or unexplained happenings that signify a coming event. Omens can be extremely dramatic and should be used sparingly. Rare natural phenomena may also be taken as omens, such as eclipses, meteor impacts, earthquakes or volcanic eruptions. Changes in natural cycles are also effective omens, such as a blizzard on a spring day.

Omens make good elements in prophecies, as they are completely under the control of the Storyteller. Symbolic and allegorical omens work extremely well. Plagues of locusts could herald the coming of disease or starvation.

Developing Prophecies

"When the pack of many colors become one in darkness and death lies in the lair of the three lions, then the end shall come to this caern." Cryptic statements like this can drive a chronicle. This phrase might be dismissed as the ramblings of a brain-damaged elder. When the multi-tribal pack kills a Black Spiral Dancer in the headquarters of Royal British Imports during the night of a new moon, only to notice

"This Isn't Happening!"

Sometimes, a character goes into a state of denial regarding stressful events. This works fine if the character is well played and not too disruptive to the group. Pushed too far, a player can make his character the center of attention with this tactic, all in the name of "good roleplaying," where every story features the rest of the pack debating his werewolf about the reality of the Apocalypse. For a while, such behavior may add flavor to a chronicle, but over time, it becomes repetitive and dull.

If the behavior is the natural reaction of a well-played character, one way to shock them into reality is to bring the Apocalypse home. If they lose a loved one to the disaster, they may realize that denial can only lead to more pain and suffering. A trusted mentor or friend can speak to the Garou and convince them that the dark times have come. The best method is to step back and let the other members of the pack convince their packmate of the error of his ways.

Disruptive denial from a player who refuses to have her character recognize the obvious may call for serious measures. Often, such disruptions are a sign of dissatisfaction, possibly a lack of direction or a feeling of inadequacy. A Storyteller may want to take the player aside after a session and talk to them about the character one on one. Find out how the player feels about her werewolf and see what suggestions or ideas might work to make the character better fit into the chronicle. If all else fails, a Storyteller should point out to the player how her character is acting and explain how it's disrupting the chronicle.

three lions on the company logo as they leave, they should all have chills.

Going beyond published material helps to tailor the events of the Apocalypse to your own chronicle. When creating the prophecies and visions that directly detail the end times in your chronicle, follow the following rules.

First, write down the symbol, prophecy or sign and all the details about it. Creating a prophecy that no one can remember, including the Storyteller, only diminishes the feeling of fate and destiny in a chronicle. If the Storyteller can't remember the prophecy, then it must not be relevant. Also, writing signs and omens down along with their meanings insures that when the time comes for them to pass in the chronicle, events unfold to make them true. When players say, "Wait, the prophecy was wrong, no one was wounded by a silver dagger! It can't be the Apocalypse!" a Storyteller has trouble.

Second, keep the meaning of any foretelling vague. By keeping the true meaning unclear, a Storyteller may adapt the prophecy to fit the events of a chronicle. Even with fudging the occasional die roll, accurately predicting the exact course of a chronicle is beyond the abilities of any Storyteller. Freedom comes from generalizations.

Many fortune-tellers use similar techniques. Take the statement "I see a woman in your future." Half of the population of the world is female. What are the chances that someone has a woman in their future? Pretty close to perfect. The significance of the statement depends on the listener. Once he hears the statement, he looks for a woman to play a role in his life. Another classic line is "I see change in your future." Everyone experiences changes in their lives. Again, the statement relies on its significance to the listener.

Applying these techniques to **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**, a Storyteller could successfully rely on a statement such as "There will be blood on the night of the full moon." With an Ahroun's tendency to Rage, a fight scene run on a night of the full moon will certainly make that vision of the future come true. Most players see through such obvious generalizations, so the Storyteller must add more to the statement.

"There will be blood on the night of the full moon, when silver fur mixes with black and the Unicorn cries." This prophecy builds on the first, relying on an easily controlled situation, set up by the Storyteller. If a one of the characters is a Black Fury, the Storyteller could have a Silver Fang, fraught with madness, attack her. No matter who wins the fight, both tribes could seek reparations, leading them to the brink of tribal warfare despite protest from local Children of Gaia. This type of prophecy is much stronger, and can easily be individualized for a chronicle.

Third, don't be afraid to change the prophecy to fit the events. Sometimes, no matter how general or vague a prophecy, it doesn't fit events as they unfold. In this case, a Storyteller can sometimes retrofit a prophecy, usually by adding to it. Taking the above example, "There will be blood on the night of the full moon" as a prophetic statement, and then having a game session set for a battle on the night of the full moon is great. But, if the pack comes up with a way to end the conflict without spilling blood, then they may doubt the prophecy. All that needs to be done to avoid this problem is to revisit the prophecy and add to it. If the characters go to the elder to tell him his visions are false, he simply needs to add to it. He tells the pack that he did not reveal everything for the true statement of Gaia was, "There will be blood on the night of the full moon, unless the chosen ones who will endure the breath of the Wyrm stand against Gaia's enemies." By adding to the prophecy, characters may feel they've been tricked and kick themselves for not asking more questions. They will pay more attention to future prophecies and now wonder about the breath of the Wyrm.

Fourth, let the player characters discuss the true meanings of prophecies on their own and listen carefully to their interpretations. Some players love to figure out puzzles and decipher secret meanings. Give them a chance to do so and listen to their interpretations. Perception is reality. If they believe something, then it's real to them. They may even come up with an interpretation of a cryptic statement that fits better into the Storyteller's plotlines than the Storyteller's version. A good Storyteller leaps on the opportunity to tap into his players' imagination.

Fifth, don't let the players utterly miss prophecies. If something happens to cause a prophecy to come true, and the players all miss it, the Storyteller shouldn't be afraid to reveal what happened. Spirits or ancient Theurges have the mystic awareness to realize the significance of what has happened. Enigmas or Ancestors rolls make good solutions for revelation as well. If a Storyteller doesn't eventually reveal that a prophecy has come true, then the importance of the prophecy is lost, because the players never become aware of it. Even worse, they could spend their time chasing down red herrings, looking for a prophecy to come true that already has.

Finally, write the prophecies down, including the source and the specifics. This point deserves re-emphasis, especially for those Storytellers who run sessions without sourcebooks or notes. Some players will write down prophecies, and if a Storyteller wants something to be important for his players, it needs to be important to him. When changes are made to prophecies, or the prophecies are fulfilled, this should be noted as well.

The Legend Says We Lose

When making prophecies, the Storyteller must consider that the future is not set in stone. Sometimes, characters may place themselves directly against a prophecy in an attempt to change the course of the Apocalypse. One of the best ways to handle this problem would be to change the prophecy by adding to it.

However, there may be a time when the Storyteller wants the characters to defy a prophecy. A deed like this should come toward the latter stages of a chronicle, otherwise, the characters might threaten to defy all omens and prophecies. Once the characters are successful, they should have a sense of empowerment, and other Garou may seek them out hoping to receive their aid. Disproving a prophecy should be a major event during the Apocalypse.

Adapting Other Traditions

Who says that the werewolves really understand the universe? Every tradition has its own cosmology and tale about the end of the world. What if Garou Theurges were wrong? Every tribe has its own specific legends about the Apocalypse, but perhaps none of the tribes see the whole picture.

Other traditions may be intertwined with werewolf mythology as part of the Apocalypse. Religious and mythological sources provide ready source material. Several accounts of Ragnarok from Norse mythology can be located online or in a library. For the Get of Fenris, Ragnarok may not stray far from their traditions, but Uktena may recoil as fire giants walk the earth. On the other hand, hundreds of Native American traditions exist which the Wendigo and Uktena tribes might find more to their liking. Great beasts might arise from the icy North or the sun could stop in the skies.

The Bible's Book of Revelation provides one of the most detailed and analyzed versions of the end of the world. The four horsemen of the Apocalypse might be Maeljin Incarnae, and the symbolism of the various Apocalypse beasts and figures can be neatly applied to significant spirits. Religious bookstores have entire sections dedicated to the Book of Revelations, so information is easy to obtain. When using any living religion, the Storyteller should feel out his players to make sure that everyone is comfortable with their beliefs and the role of religion in the game.

The Arthurian legend tells that the king will return to Britain in its time of greatest need. The idea of the sleeping king exists in many Celtic traditions. This legend could herald the return of a Garou hero, or possibly a reborn King Arthur in the form of a Fianna or one of their Kinfolk.

When adapting mythology to the Apocalypse, research the myths and spend time translating them into the world of **Werewolf**. Incarnae can play the parts of gods, and mythological beasts may be spirit-possessed animals or spirits themselves. The more seamlessly the myth fits into the Garou vision of the cosmos, the more useful it becomes.

Real world science offers its own disasters. A quick perusal of earth and space sciences provide several possibilities for Apocalypse. Most of these ideas wind up in Hollywood movies in some form or another. Everyone is familiar with asteroids, comets and black holes crashing into earth. This makes a stellar impact scenario seem plausible. Stellar impacts can set off earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. They may create tremendous tidal waves, wiping out inhabited coastlines. Firestorms might result, devastating forests and leaving the world in an endless night of soot.

When using real world science, the first rule is to know the science. Just having something happen can result in problems as players look for side effects or causes of which the Storyteller may not be aware. Secondly, work the event into the prophecies and background of the Apocalypse. For stellar events, **Rage Across the Heavens** provides plenty of source material. By adding a spiritual and mythological backdrop to the event, errors in science seem like evidence of mysticism. Finally, weigh the consequences. Even the Wyrm itself may not seem more impressive than a solar flare burning off the atmosphere. Total nuclear war may provide the basis for an entirely new setting. A disaster that destroys all life on earth may not leave the Garou with anything to fight for, even if they do survive.

Fiction serves as a source for stories about the end of the world. A favorite novel or movie may provide a scenario for the Apocalypse that could be adapted to **Werewolf**. The Weaver could start the Apocalypse as artificially intelligent androids fulfill the prophecies, overthrowing the humans and slaughtering wolves. A criminal mastermind could unleash a genetically designed plague across the planet, as in a spy or superhero movie.

Other White Wolf games contain material about the end of time. **Vampire: The Masquerade** and **Mage: The Ascension** both boast numerous forces that could bring about the end of humanity. Reading through a few of their sourcebooks will provide a Storyteller with many ideas. **Mummy: The Resurrection** and even **Exalted** (if you're willing to overlook the universe disconnect)—both contain entities with enough power to start the Apocalypse. Although the game systems

may be slightly different, translating abilities into **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** shouldn't be overly hard.

Werewolf: Book of Revelations

Taking source material a step further, the Storyteller could design a chronicle where the Garou had everything wrong and use an outside source for material to create the Apocalypse. The destruction in the Book of Revelations could come to pass with the Garou as Gaia's defenders on the plains of Armageddon.

Although changing the setting this dramatically is a major departure from **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**, the material and advice in this book can be adapted for use any world-threatening chronicle. In this case, the challenge becomes how to interpret the Garou traditions and make them fit into the "truth," the end of the world based on this outside source. This can make a challenging and unique chronicle.

The Final Battle

Eventually, everything leads to a final confrontation, the Mother of All Battles, with warriors of sickening power levels dueling each other while the fabric of reality rips asunder. In order to avoid the climatic scene of the chronicle degrading into a slow-moving dice fest, a Storyteller needs to have some plans.

The Storyteller must determine which fights need dice and which ones do not. If an avatar of the Wyrm attacks an avatar of Gaia in the Umbra, the Storyteller should describe the battle and the outcome. A duel between two entities of such tremendous power goes far beyond anything the combat system can handle. The importance of the result should be part of the plotline, not a randomly determined event.

Only the part of the fight directly involving the characters requires rolling. If the battle is a large scale event and the Storyteller wants a random result, feel free to roll two ten-siders and compare the results, adding a few points if one opponent or side has a major advantage. This keeps the battle moving, rather than having players sit and wait for results during rounds. This frees the Storyteller to concentrate on cinematic descriptions and dialogue rather than worrying about the rules for potent Charms and Rank 5 Gifts in the background.

The most important part of the climax is the role of the characters. The Storyteller must strive to ensure that each player character contributes to the outcome. Few players will be happy if they feel useless in the final battle. This is a dramatically important event, in some respects, the conclusion of a game system as well as a chronicle. The Storyteller wants everyone to have fond memories, even if their characters die in the end.

Finally, this is the time for heroic deaths. For many Garou, nothing could be better than dying in battle. Again, the characters should contribute, but the Storyteller should have no compunctions about having werewolves die in the final scene.

Ending Everything

It's the end of **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**. All the tribes die. All the major characters from chronicles on end meet their final fate. How can a Storyteller wrap up everything so the players can find out?

A Storyteller can't wrap up everything. No matter how thorough a Storyteller tries to be, some plot threads will fall through the cracks. It's important not to try to wrap up everything. If no one in the chronicle plays a Shadow Lord, and there are no Shadow Lords involved with the caern or present as Storyteller characters, then the final fate of the Shadow Lords becomes largely irrelevant. However, if three of five player characters in the chronicle are Bone Gnawers, then the fate of that tribe is extremely important.

In order to avoid the last sessions becoming laundry lists of what's happening worldwide to every character in every White Wolf supplement, stick to your own chronicle. A Storyteller shouldn't worry about what happens to everyone. In all disasters, the fates of some beings remain unknown.

If players absolutely demand to know everything, one idea to consider is having a post-Apocalypse party, where you as Storyteller subject yourself to a question and answer session about what happened. Another idea is to send your players a long e-mail about what happened to major Storyteller characters and sections of the world. The advantage of the e-mail is that you can check your answers and think things through. The party may be a bit more fun however and a good time for everyone to reminisce about their favorite stories and scenes.

Werewolf: Post-Apocalypse

Every ending may also be a new beginning. Although a chronicle may come to a close after the events of the Apocalypse, that doesn't mean that playing in the new world is impossible. Before you decide to run a chronicle or continue a chronicle after the end, keep several things in mind.

First, does the Storyteller want to keep playing a chronicle after the Apocalypse? The end of the world is a tough act to follow. No climax will likely rival the events of the Apocalypse. What type of story and plotline will the Storyteller create? Is the Storyteller inspired to face the brave new world or being cajoled into keeping someone's favorite character alive?

Second, do the players want to keep playing? Players like to see the end of a good story as much as Storytellers

do. Of course, some players will always want to play their dear characters, but the Storyteller should check with them to make sure that they are in the majority.

One idea would be to start a new chronicle, possibly with relatives or descendants of the Apocalypse characters set in the new world. This helps to distance your next chronicle from any remaining baggage or power left over from the Apocalypse, yet leaves you free to provide cameos for overly powerful stars of the previous chronicle.

Aftermath

So, if the group wants a post-holocaust chronicle, what should it look like? What is the aftermath of the Apocalypse? What has survived? Here are a few possibilities (presuming there's anything left, of course; not something that's guaranteed).

Dead World

The Apocalypse all but destroys Earth. Gaia still exists and a few of Her spirits gather around Her in an attempt to ease Her pain. A few caerns still sustain life. Civilization no longer exists and the remnants of humanity live in tribal groups scavenging the ruins. Volcanoes send ash into the heavens. The ground quakes with burning rivers of magma, while frozen winds herald the coming of great sheets of ice. The Umbra still holds spiritual power, but much of it has fallen asunder, filled with the death cries of the world. Toxins in the environment deform all new Garou as if they were metis cubs. Werewolves may be on the verge of extinction.

This future holds little hope, although perhaps something could save the Earth out in the Deep Umbra. Technology and the Weaver may hold the answer, or perhaps the Wyld can create life out of the desolation. It may even be possible that a new Wyrm, freed of its pre-Apocalypse torment could guide the pack to save Gaia.

Spiritual Utopia

The Gauntlet is no more. Once again, the physical and the spiritual are one. It is a time of spiritual awakening and transformations of life across the globe. Out of the ruin of the last age, a new dawn has come, where spiritual gifts flow freely among all living things. Humans have reconnected with Gaia and they understand their place in the world. Dark powers still exist, but they are on the run, desperately trying to find some way to turn the tides and use the new spiritual nature of humans as a way to corrupt them.

In this world, the Garou have to help humans and wolves repopulate and rebuild the world. They have to stop humans and animals without the will to control their new powers. Werewolves could ferret out the remaining dark spirits who plot against Gaia. In many ways, this starts a new golden age for all, a return to Eden.

Evolution

The world has changed. New life-forms emerge from the ruins of the old world. Strange spirits take hold across the land. Humanity stands divided between allegiances to the Wyld, as some of them now possess spiritual magics, and the Weaver, which has armed its followers with advanced machinery. The Garou must try to sort out the good from the bad and find their place in a world that is no longer their own.

In this science fantasy aftermath, werewolves can take any role. Perhaps the tribes no longer exist. This world poses the question of identity for the Garou. They must decide who and what they are and how they will find a place in this world.

The Bunker

All the survivors live in a large underground complex, humans, animals, plants, with as much biodiversity as geneticists can clone from precious samples. The werewolves are the last of their kind, stuck in a dark prison beneath a poisoned planet. However, dark spirits tempt the people to climb out into the light to let the evil inside, or are they the voices of the good spirits calling for help? And how do the werewolves hide their existence or explain themselves?

Aftermath Revisited

These are a few ideas upon which to build. The Apocalypse doesn't have to be the final chapter for the Garou, but the world will never be the same.

Appendix: Rules and Dramatis Personae

Old Enemies

Regrettably, there isn't space to provide game statistics for all the old legends that could conceivably return in time for an Apocalypse scenario. The list of ancient and not-so-ancient monsters that would make fantastic leaders of the Wyrm's forces is just too long. The Zmei, Koschchei the Deathless, The First Ronin, the Vhujunka, the Storm Eater, even "guest stars" like Kupala, Set or the Bane Mummies — there are far too many to handle here. However, two foes in particular deserve at least a little bit of attention — the giants called "Fomorians" by the Fianna and "Jotunn" by the Fenrir, and the Chosen of the Green Dragon, Zhyzhak.

The Last Giants

The tribes that live toward the north of the world keep tales of a great race of destroyers that swept across the world in times past and were hurled back only by great sacrifice and valor. The Fianna called them the Fomorians; to the Get of Fenris, they were the Jotunn. Even the Wendigo have tales of giants of great corruption and strength that only the greatest warriors among werewolves could match. In the tongue of the Wyrm, they are the Vo'lag. However, they name themselves as appropriate to the area they invade; those that descend on the Get of Fenris' homeland certainly answer to Jotunn, while those who strike to conquer Russia name themselves Tugarin. (If your players have been musing over the true nature of the Fomorians for some time, it would be a shame for them not to be able to cry "Fomorians!" when they come face to face.)

Although none of the End scenarios directly involve a return of these monsters, they could certainly be inserted into the Final Battle. In a Last Battleground chronicle, they could be a form of secret weapon, shock troops of the Wyrm called back from the dark Umbral realms where they waited in exile. If using A Tribe Falls, they might be involved in the fall of the Fianna, Get of Fenris or Wendigo — imagine an Apocalypse where the fallen Children of Stag march alongside the Fomorians under the Wyrm's banner! And, of course, Ragnarok splits the earth open and releases so many evils that they would fit rather neatly among them.

Vo'lag

Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 3, Stamina 7, Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance varies, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Brawl 4, Dodge 2, Intimidation 4; Leadership 3, Melee 5, Survival 4; Medicine 2, Occult 3

Rage: 6; **Gnosis:** 3; **Willpower:** 7

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

Attacks: Two-handed sword or axe (Strength +3 lethal damage, diff. 7)

Powers: Most Vo'lag possess the equivalent of one or two Black Spiral Dancer Gifts of low level. Many also wear well-crafted breastplates, helms and/or greaves (two or three dice of extra soak, no Dexterity penalty).

Image: The lost giants are incredibly varied in appearance; some are hideously deformed, while others would be beautiful if not for their thick builds and palpable cruelty. All stand between eight and ten feet tall, with muscular frames that range from simple bulk to grotesque overdevelopment. Some have bestial features such as the head of a boar or the scales of a fish; others have immense horns, an unusual number of eyes, arms or even heads, or strange skin colors; some even seem to be sculpted from living ice, or have dancing balefires for hair. Their gear appears to be of ancient make and strange materials — black iron, oddly green-hued bronze, unrecognizable leathers — worked with designs that echo ancient human cultures but are obviously of no human origin.

Background: Millennia ago, the Vo'lag fought against the hated wolf-men who kept them from plundering the warm, soft world. The Garou drove them into the north, into the cold, into the sea — but they escaped into places the wolves never found. Now they are loosed to fight the war that their grandfathers lost. This time they will win. This time the world is theirs.

Storytelling Notes: The lost giants are best used in warbands large enough to be frightening but not so large that the players' disbelief is strained. A single Fomorian might be an excellent war-leader for a fomori horde, and a group could be the champions of the local invasion in much the same way as the Black Spiral Dancers. They are elite fighters, the terror of old days returned, and should be used with appropriate respect.

Zhyzhak

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Ahroun

Tribe: Black Spiral Dancers

Physical: Strength 7 (9/11/10/8), Dexterity 5 (5/6/7/7), Stamina 6 (8/9/9/8)

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 2 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 4 (3/0/4/4)

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Intimidation 5, Primal-Urge 5, Streetwise 3

Skills: Drive 1, Firearms 4, Leadership 5, Melee 5, Stealth 5, Survival 5

Knowledges: Enigmas 3, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Occult 5, Politics 4, Rituals 4

Backgrounds: Personal Totem 20

Gifts: (1) Bane Protector, Falling Touch, Inspiration, Master of Fire, Razor Claws, Sense Wyrm, Toxic Claws; (2) Horns of the Impaler, Sense Silver, Spirit of the Fray, Staredown, Terrify, True Fear, Wyrm Hide; (3) Dagger of the Mind, Disquiet, Foaming Fury, Silver Claws; (4) Clenched Jaw, Cocoon, Crawling Poison, Open Wounds; (5) Avatar of the Wyrm, Balefire, Kiss of Helios, Part the Veil

Rank: 6

Rage: 10; **Gnosis:** 10; **Willpower:** 10

Rites: None that you'll ever get to see and live.

Fetishes: Btk'uthoklnto. Zhyzhak's Devilwhip operates as a normal whip, except in that it does Strength +3 aggravated damage.

Special Note: As the Green Dragon's chosen child, Zhyzhak can vomit toxic flames at an opponent three times a day. The attack has a range of six feet and can be dodged at difficulty 6, but this requires at least four successes. In addition, she has one extra die to soak damage.

Image: Zhyzhak is a force of terror — even in Homid form, she's an unnaturally tall, muscle-bound warrior with striking but cruel features. She frequently wears fetish gear, never bothering to dedicate it; she is not subtle, and appears in public only when she's ready to kill every last person she sees.

Roleplaying Notes: Zhyzhak's klazomania (a mental illness that causes her to shout rather than speak) comes and goes, as her mind becomes more and more filled with unholy voices. She is a dark messiah for her people, and Green Dragon himself has invested her with much of his considerable power. She is a true child of Rage, to the extent that she knows little else. She does not torture, she does not linger, she does not toy with her foes — she kills, kills and kills. She has been promised the honor of breaking the world open to watch it bleed in the Final Days, and nothing the weak, puny Gaians have to offer will stop her from living out that delicious destiny.

Hellcats

A few years before the Apocalypse, the Black Spiral Dancers managed to eliminate almost an entire tribe of Bastet. The Ceilican were a European tribe of werecats, originally descended from the European lion but eventually fallen to breeding with Iberian lynx and similar cats. Like the Fianna, they had a tenuous relationship with the fae, one that they used to learn Gifts of glamour and illusion. However, they chose the highlands of Scotland as their yearly gathering place, and that was their downfall. The Black Spiral Dancers stormed their grand yearly moot, slaughtering most of the Ceilican — but not all. A few managed to escape, but most survivors were simply taken, bound and dragged into the Pits below the hills to meet their new masters.

In the intervening years, those captured Ceilican have been tortured, exposed to the Wyrm — and eventually turned. The Ceilican were already close to a wild madness and Rage that alienated their Kin; now that madness has been magnified by the process of dancing the Spiral. They act as specialized skirmishers on the battlefields of Apocalypse, striking at isolated leaders or cutting apart the weak links of a formation. Many carry Wyrm-fetishes of their own making; like all Bastet, they love a new mystical tool or weapon, and adapted quickly to the blasphemous rites of their new Dark Father.

In Crinos and Chatro form, the hellcats have a leonine cast to their features, although their once-noble forms have been marred with ritual scars in honor of the Wyrm, and many have learned the self-deforming Gifts popular among the Black Spiral Dancers. Those with Pure Breed have pure white pelts, like a feline reflection of the white-coated Black Spiral Dancers who echo their White Howler ancestors.

Fallen Ceilican use a mixture of Black Spiral Dancer Gifts, Fianna Gifts and general Bastet Gifts. They regenerate as Garou and cause reduced Delirium in Crinos and full Delirium in Chatro. For more details on the Bastet, see **Players Guide to the Changing Breeds**.

Ceilican Form Statistics

Sokto	Crinos	Chatro	Feline
Str +1	Str +2	Str +3	Str +1
Dex +2	Dex +3	Dex +3	Dex +3
Sta +1	Sta +2	Sta +2	Sta +1
App -1	App 0		
Man -1	Man -3	Man -3	Man -3

The Last Battleground

Lisamaru Blade

Level 6 Fetish, Gnosis 8

The Lisamaru blade takes the shape of a large dull grey metal box with a hilt, much like a sword, but considerably thicker, blockier and with a notably open top. The edges do thin out to razor sharpness for slicing, doing Strength +3 aggravated damage with difficulty 7 to hit. When activated, however, the open end of the blade produces a crackling beam of electricity, heat and light that extends outwards from the blade. Every success beyond the first made on a standard Dexterity + Melee attack roll takes the damage to an additional opponent, so that three successes on the roll would damage three different opponents (the one hit by the blade and two more). All suffer the full damage the blade would normally inflict; this damage is treated as regular aggravated damage for purposes of soak.

A Tribe Falls

Gifts

Black Spiral Dancer Gifts

• **Plague Child (Level Two)** — The favored children of the Plague Rats (see p. 90) may choose to learn this Gift to represent their fallen totem's favor. The fallen werewolf who knows this Gift finds that ordinary diseases

just can't take hold in his system. He does act as a carrier, though, and can inadvertently (or deliberately) infect passersby with a cough or sneeze. Plague Child does not especially protect against supernatural plagues.

System: The character is immune to non-magical, non-biowarfare diseases. No roll or expenditure is needed. Magical plagues (like the Metamorphic Plague that troubles the Black Furies) can still infect the werewolf, and specially engineered germ warfare agents also remain dangerous.

The werewolf remains a carrier of these diseases — they live on or in him, but do him no harm. A Plague Rat or Black Spiral Dancer with this Gift may find that those he encounters fall ill with one of dozens of diseases from tuberculosis to malaria. Plague Child doesn't make these diseases any more virulent, but a healthy and mobile carrier is always better able to spread a disease than one incapacitated by it.

• **Sprint in Shadow (Level Two)** — The Black Spiral Dancers live beneath the surface of the Earth, down in the chthonic darkness and close to the inhuman gibbering monsters that they worship as incarnations of their god. A Garou's long run is difficult through tunnels, as it depends on having plenty of room to run in straight lines and periodic sustenance. The Black Spirals turned in their earliest days to the spirits that cavort in the wake of Thunderwyrms, hoping that such spirits could teach them magics to increase their speed when traveling under the earth. This Gift is taught by a worm-spirit.

System: The character spends a point of Rage and rolls Stamina + Primal-Urge. If one success is earned, the Black Spiral can undertake a Long Run (**Werewolf**, p. 197) despite being underground and in occasionally close tunnels. Each additional success on the Stamina + Primal Urge roll increases the Long Run speed by a factor of one (so two successes means that the character runs twice as fast as an ordinary Long Run; three successes means three times as fast, and so on).

Fetishes

Wolf Skin

Level One, Gnosis 6

In nearly every one of the tribal fall scenarios, the tribe of fallen Garou chooses to keep its Wyrm-tainted nature secret from the rest of the Garou Nation until the time is right to strike. The Wyrm grants each of the traitors a fetish to conceal its Wyrm-taint from the Gift: Sense Wyrm. This fetish is modeled after the Bane Skin fetish (see **Werewolf**, p. 301). It consists of an ounce or so of dried wolf flesh wrapped in silver wire and worn close to the flesh. The silver wire burns the Garou slightly, but as a bonded fetish it doesn't do damage or siphon off Gnosis.

The Wolf Skin has a lifespan ranging from weeks to months (specifics are not detailed in order to better fit the Storyteller's plan). At the end of that time, the fetish crumbles to dust within the span of a few hours, leaving the Garou who wears it with no protection against a casual use of Sense Wyrm. This seems to be the Wyrm's way of telling its new subjects that while it can have a few weeks' or months' cover against the rest of the Garou Nation, they must strike as a tribe eventually.

Rites

Dry the Well (Caern, Wyrm)

Level Three

This rite turns a caern into a simple Glade — it caps off the real upwelling of Gaia's power that coalesces into a true caern. This renders it all but useless by Gaia's warriors — and they cannot renew the caern by performing the simple Rite of Caern Opening. Instead, they must rebuild the caern with the Rite of Caern Building. This often leaves the targeted caern far less powerful than it had previously been, if it is ever reopened at all.

To perform this rite, the Garou must ritually desecrate the sacred space that the caern represents, and then ritually clean the desecration. The intent of this rite is not to truly defile, after all, but simply to close off an upwelling of power. In times past the Black Spiral Dancers rarely used this rite, but the coming of the Apocalypse means they no longer have the luxury to take, defile and rededicate caerns to the Wyrm.

System: The ritemaster rolls Intelligence + Occult with a difficulty of the caern's rating + 4. The ritemaster must achieve three successes per level of the caern in an extended test. A failure during the extended test does not doom the rite (though two successive failures do). A botch during the extended test does a number of lethal health levels of damage equal to the caern's rating to any Garou who participate in the rite. A number of Garou equal to the caern's rating must participate in the rite (and associated ritual desecration and cleaning).

Rite of the Bright Candle (Mystic)

This relatively simple rite enables a Garou to bolster his will for a short period of time, at the expense of his long-term strength of will. To perform it, the Garou must chew on — but not swallow — properly enchanted and awakened psychoactive herbs.

System: The rite takes 30 minutes to perform — 25 minutes in preparing the herbs (which cannot be readied beforehand) and 5 minutes of the subject chewing and sucking on the plants. At the conclusion of this period, the ritemaster rolls Intelligence + Occult. For each success, the subject of the rite (who may be the ritemaster) gains one temporary point of Willpower, to a maximum of 10. These points fade as they

are spent. However, after the Garou has spent all of the newly-gained points of Willpower, his Willpower trait (and pool) is cut in half (round down) for a full month.

This rite is particularly useful when a werewolf faces a do-or-die situation — one where he knows that if he succeeds he will face no other challenges for a few weeks, and if he fails he'll die or be horribly mangled.

Rite of the Burning Bridge (Caern)

Level Four

This rite permanently destroys a moon bridge connecting two caerns. It is never entered into lightly — it was last used extensively hundreds of years ago, as Croatan, Uktena and Wendigo used it to sever connections opened by European and Asian Garou into the Pure Lands. Since then its use has only been threatened — a modern sept would only perform this rite if it found a Wyrm-tainted moon bridge attached to it, or similarly dire circumstances. Modern Garou rely far too much on moon bridges to casually sever them.

The ritemaster needs three other Garou to perform this — each werewolf stands at one of the cardinal directions, surrounding the bright heart of the caern proper. If the heart of the caern is large enough, the rite's participants do not need to be able to see one another, but they must be able to hear one another's voices.

All four participants must name the caern at the other end of the moon bridge to be destroyed — they must speak the name in Gaia's tongue, even if the caern's name is hard to express in that language. The participants then invoke Luna, each using three names for her that the others do not use. Each participant must also provide chiminage to Luna to compensate her for the destruction of her bridge. They must then speak a ritual apology to Luna for the destruction, followed by a ritual chant for the fires of Helios to destroy the moon bridge. At the successful culmination of the rite, the bridge is destroyed.

System: The chiminage provided to Luna must be fairly serious — at least ten pounds of silver per participant — or an equivalent value in other goods. The ritual takes a full hour to perform. If any of the Garou is prevented from taking part in the ritual apology and invocation, the rite fails. However, the Garou *can* try to holler out his proper invocations even while grappled or otherwise under attack — he can shout through a held mouth or throat with a Strength + Performance roll.

The Master of the Rite must succeed in a Charisma + Rituals roll for this rite to work properly. If he succeeds, at the end of the hour the moon bridge is destroyed. It cannot be re-opened; however, after one full month has passed, Garou in both caerns may cooperate to attempt to establish a new moon bridge.

Rite of the Vengeful Spider (Mystic)

Level Six

This dire and poisonous ritual has lain dormant since the fall of the White Howlers, hidden in the bowels of Wyrm lore, waiting for the dawn of the Apocalypse to see its use. Only the most powerful Wyrmish ritualists have even a prayer of using it successfully, and most of those who participate in the ritual will surely be driven suicidally insane by the rite's end. Even at the dawn of the Apocalypse, only two individuals know the rite — one human wizard, and one Rank Five Black Spiral Dancer Theurge (Anyakh the All-Devourer, unless the Storyteller has a more appropriate candidate already participating in her chronicle). By the end of the rite, an Incarna spirit is either destroyed, driven into dormancy, or falls into the service of the Wyrm.

The ritual requires the participation of at least five ritualists. The rite has several other major elements. The ritemaster must have one of the 92 copies of Frater Vermiis's *The Pretanic Keys* on hand, for he reads aloud from it daily during the rite's performance. The rite calls upon the dark wisdom embedded in a Soul Ruby, and it also requires five *gallons* of Balefire (see **Book of the Wyrm**, Second Edition, p. 144-6 for details on all these elements).

As difficult as the acquisition of any of the above elements must be, the ritualists must also capture — alive — five Rank Five Garou of a single tribe. No two of these Garou may be of the same auspice; thus, the rite's victims symbolically represent the entire breadth of that tribe.

The Rite of the Vengeful Spider takes 7 days to complete. It must begin on the night of a full moon or new moon. Through the 7 days of this ritual, the ritemaster and other participants may not sleep or otherwise rest, though they may sustain themselves with food, water, and whatever occult or chemical substances they require to remain conscious.

Each day of the rite brings about a new series of torments to its Garou victims. Throughout the week the Garou are reminded that only the Wyrm can ease their suffering. The first day is relatively simple: Humiliation. The werewolves are mocked, physically forced to prostrate themselves before the sigil of the Wyrm, and the sigil of the tribal totem is defaced and desecrated. The second day is Injury. Each of the werewolves is brutally beaten, allowed to heal, and beaten again, for a full day. The ritualists carefully avoid using any weapons whose wounds a werewolf cannot quickly heal.

Day three is Violation. The Garou are repeatedly sexually violated by their tormentors and their minds are penetrated by mind-reading Gifts and Charms. Their darkest secrets are announced for all to hear. Day

four is Exposure. The ritualists carefully and deftly use silver instruments to expose the werewolves' beating hearts to the elements while keeping them alive. Day five is Torment. The Garou are abused to the very point of death, including terrible injuries that a werewolf of lesser rank could not possibly survive.

Day six is Redemption. The Ritemaster heals all the injuries caused over the past few days, beseeching the Wyrm to bring redemption and a surcease from pain and doubt. Day seven is Death. The Garou are ritually slain in unison and their hearts devoured by the ritualists.

If the rite is interrupted, it ends without spiritual repercussions (except possibly to those Garou who are tormented).

If the ritual is completed without interruption, there are three possibilities:

If each of the five Garou cries out to the Wyrm for respite at some point during the week, the tribe's totem spirit falls to the Wyrm's service.

If any of the Garou die before the week ends, the tribe's totem spirit dies.

If none of the Garou die until the final moment of the ritual, and even one of them avoids calling out to the Wyrm for respite, the totem spirit goes dormant for a period of at least one year, but is not destroyed nor does it fall into the Wyrm's hands.

System: Not a lot of game-mechanical systems are really called for through this rite. It is hardly expected that the victims of the ritual will be the troupe's characters — in fact, it is *strongly* recommended that this rite *not* be played out. Rather, the pack may find out about this ritual after the fact, or find themselves in a race against time to stop it. The details above are provided so that the Storyteller may gauge what activities are going on as the rite is interrupted, or so that Garou who investigate the aftermath of such a rite can piece together what went on.

Any ritualist participating must have a Gnosis of at least 5. Ritualists that aren't already insane or in the service of the Wyrm must make regular Willpower tests to continue to perform the rite. The loss of a ritualist to madness or death does not impact the rite itself so long as at least five qualified ritualists continue to participate.

Garou victims of this ritual gain 5 points of Honor Renown, whether they live or die, if they make it without calling out for surcease. They lose one full point of all three Renown types if they call out to the Wyrm for respite; they lose *at least* an entire rank if they are the fifth Garou to cry out.

The victims must make repeated Willpower tests to avoid calling out for the Wyrm's gentle hand — given that the victims of the ritual, as well as the ritualists, are all likely to be Storyteller characters, it makes the most sense to simply handwave these tests in the interest of the story.

Weaver Ascendant

Gaian Allies

Mary Otafire, Corax Umbral Guide

Breed: Homid

Physical: Strength 2 (3/1), Dexterity 4 (5/5), Stamina 2 (3/2)

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5 (2/2), Appearance 3 (2/3)

Mental: Perception 4 (7/8), Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Dodge 3, Expression 4, Primal Urge 3, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Etiquette 2, Gossip 3, Performance 4, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Knowledges: Enigmas 5, Investigation 3, Linguistics 3, Navigation 5, Occult 4, Rituals 3

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 4, Resources 3, Rites 3, Umbral Maps 5

Gifts: (1) Enemy Ways, Morse, Spirit Speech, Word Beyond; (2) Omens and Signs, Snitch; (3) Eyes of the Eagle, Flight of the Swift, Mynah's Touch, Pulse of the Invisible; (4) Airt Sense, Gauntlet Runner, Grasp the Beyond, Helios' Child

Rage: 4; **Gnosis:** 8; **Willpower:** 6
Rank: 4
Rites: Rite of Becoming, Rite of the Sun's Bright Ray, Rite of Talisman Dedication

Background: Mary Otafire is a Makunguru, a white-necked African Corax. She spent her formative years on the streets of Mombassa, never knowing of the extraordinary destiny that had been chosen for her. When she underwent her First Change, her spiritual parent helped her to turn her life around. He helped arrange Mary's emigration to the United States, where the unusual Corax has remained ever since. Mary adapted well to life as a wereraven, and it wasn't long before she was stealing secrets as easily as she once stole food and tourists' wallets.

Mary's business nowadays is (mostly) legitimate. She spends most of her time managing a courier service with offices in New York, London, and Nairobi, and travels through the Umbra at every opportunity. She is now one of the best Umbral guides in the world, and any who want to hire her services can do so through her offices in New York.

Image: Mary is a handsome woman of Maasai heritage in Homid form, and a white-necked raven in Corvis. Her movements have a smooth, almost catlike grace to them, even in her avian forms, which gives her a bit of notoriety among her peers.

Roleplaying Notes: You are a master of navigating your way through life, whether the challenges you face are physical or social. Try to avoid letting others press you into compromising situations, and play up the fact that you can guide anyone, anywhere, in near-record time. You're freakishly good at what you do, but there's no need to advertise the fact; your rep speaks for itself.

Heals-the-Land, Great Grandfather of Bears

Breed: Ursus
Auspice: Rishi
Tribe: Mountain Guardian
Physical: Strength 5 (8/10/9/8), Dexterity 4 (4/3/2/4), Stamina 5 (8/10/9/8)
Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 4 (2/0/4/4)
Mental: Perception 5 (6/4/7/7), Intelligence 4, Wits 5
Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Biorhythms 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Empathy 4, Primal-Urge 5
Skills: Animal Ken 5, Etiquette 4, Leadership 5, Performance 3, Survival 5
Knowledges: Enigmas 5, Investigation 3, Linguistics 2, Medicine 5, Occult 5, Rituals 5
Backgrounds: Allies 5, Fetish 5, Kinfolk 5, Rites 5, Umbral Glade 5
Gifts: (1) Befriend, Diagnose, Healing Tongue, Heightened Senses, Nature's Plenty, Sentinel's Warning, Walk Like a Man; (2) Cajole, Crush, Eyes of the Soul, Grisly Aspect, Refresh, Threaten, Weather Watch; (3) Dreams of the Buri-Jaan, Ease the Fevered Mind, Pull of the Chosen Land, Safe Passage, Sense Need, Shelter of the Earth, Ways of the Tapestry; (4) Delay the Death Bear's Coming, Spirit Healing, Strength of the Earth, Ursa's Coat; (5) Bear's Bounty, Engulf the Prey, Fearless Unveiling, Gaia's Breath, Natural State, Prophetic Vision, Rage of the Mother Bear, Restore Sanity; (6) Great Grandfather's Summons
Rage: 8; **Gnosis:** 10; **Willpower:** 10
Rank: 6
Rites: Any he needs.

Background: Heals-the-Land is the current generation's Great Grandfather of Bears, and he doesn't care for the position one bit. The world is ending — that much is apparent to anyone with eyes — and he seems to have earned the privilege of helping it along, for better or worse. He rather hoped that things wouldn't come to this, at least not in his lifetime, but it seems Gaia had other plans. Such is life.

Heals-the-Land knows full well that his is merely a supporting role in the grand scheme of things. He — and, indeed, all of the Gurahl — are meant only to help ensure that the Garou do what they know is right, nothing more. Some might chafe at being sidelined in such a fashion, but

Heals-the-Land understands that this has always been Gaia's will. If the Garou had only understood that from the beginning, things might be different now.

Image: In Homid form, Heals-the-Land is a clean-shaven man of average height and build, with brown hair and green eyes. An air of gentle sadness surrounds him, and he seems both welcoming and distant. His Crinos form is all business, towering more than 15 feet high and weighing in excess of 2,000 pounds. He rarely takes this form, but has found it extremely useful for intimidating uppity Garou. His breed form is that of a grizzled old Kodiak bear, and this is the form he favors most of the time.

Roleplaying Notes: The End Times are here, and their coming fills you with a mixture of hope and sadness. The time for play, for rage, for remorse has come and gone; all that is left now is duty, and you fight to ensure that you and your kind play their parts in the Final Battle. You only hope the Garou can do the same.

Alicia Rides-the-Aether, Nuwisha Umbral Dancer

Breed: Homid

Physical: Strength 2 (3/4/4/2), Dexterity 5 (6/8/8/8), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/6)

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 3 (2/1/0/0), Appearance 4 (4/0/4/4)

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Expression 5, Primal-Urge 3, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Etiquette 3, Performance 5, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Knowledges: Enigmas 4, Investigation 4, Linguistics 3, Medicine 4, Occult 3, Rituals 5

Backgrounds: Rites 5

Gifts: (1) Open Seal, Rabbit Run, Scent of Running Water, Song of Kokopelli, Spirit Speech, Xochipilli's Touch; (2) Blissful Ignorance, Camouflage, Twisting Tongues, Umbral Map; (3) Dance of Abandon, Gift of Laughter, Push, Shadow Walk, Umbral Sight, Umbral Howl; (4) Disappearing Act, Happy Thoughts, Locked Door; (5) Ghost Danse, Umbral Gateway, Umbral Target

Totem: Ptah

Gnosis: 10; **Willpower:** 7

Rank: 5

Rites: Any she needs.

Merits and Flaws: Umbral Affinity (3)

Background: Alicia Rides-the-Aether made a name for herself as a youth under the name Tricks-the-Foolish. At the time she followed Raven, and thought it a fine and clever idea to teach werewolves the error of their ways via practical jokes and pranks of all sorts. While a fun time was had by all (well…), she found as she matured that taunting creatures filled with Rage wasn't the most productive way to spend her time. It was, in fact, beginning to seem rather childish. So, after some thought, she shifted her priorities around and took to following Ptah, the Opener of Ways and Creator of the Universe (she's not so sure about that last part, but one doesn't argue with Incarnae). She learned the Rite of Dansing, changed her name to Rides-the-Aether, and soon after joined her kind in battling the Wyrm in the Umbra.

When Alicia learned of the extent of the Weaver's influence in the spiritual realm, she knew it would be a crucial battleground during the Final Battle of the Apocalypse. She has thus taken steps to prepare the way for the Garou, hoping that they have the presence of mind to recognize the need for the Fera during the Final Days. If they do, she'll take them wherever they want to go. All they need to do is ask.

Image: Alicia is an attractive Navajo woman who appears to be in her late twenties (she is actually much, much older than that). She dresses in traditional-yet-functional attire, and doesn't pay much attention to modern conventions of human fashion or beauty. In Manabozho form she is sleek and graceful, seemingly equal parts cat and wolf. Her Latrani form is that of a healthy coyote, albeit one with unusually sure footing.

Roleplaying Notes: Your duties to the Nuwisha are foremost in your thoughts these days, but there's still a

spark of playfulness in you. Harass others if the opportunity arises, but only if it will make them laugh; treading on their pride is a luxury you can't afford these days. Smile often, as it puts others at ease and shows them that things aren't as severe as they might be, even now. Be relentless in your defense of Gaia, no matter the foe; you might not have the Rage or the warrior instincts of the Garou, but your commitment and talents are nonetheless without peer. Show all who would corrupt Gaia's will that such things will not be tolerated — not even by those who are known as Gaia's Laughter.

Headcase, Bionic Ratkin

Breed: Rodens
Aspect: Engineer
Plague: The Rat Race
Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 8, Stamina 4
Social: Charisma 0, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1
Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4
Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Dodge 4, Primal-Urge 3
Skills: Repair 5, Stealth 3, Survival 3
Knowledges: Computer 5, Investigation 4, Rituals 2, Science 4
Backgrounds: Device 5, Fetish 5, Freak Factor 4, Rites 2
Merits and Flaws: Curiosity, Technological Delusions

Gifts: (1) Absolute Balance, Control Simple Machine, Open Seal, Scrounge, Stash Cache; (2) Crawling Chaos, Mousetrap, Scamper; (3) Control Complex Machine, Summon Electricity
Rage: 3; **Gnosis:** 5; **Willpower:** 7
Rank: 3
Rites: None
Equipment: Computer Interface Bioware (halve all computer-related difficulties so long as he has access to a terminal), Replacement Limbs

Background: Headcase has had a rough life. He had the misfortune of being captured by Pentex shortly after his First Change, and as a result he knows next to nothing about Ratkin society. Pentex was investigating the effects of cybernetic implants on shapeshifters, and apparently figured the fledgling Ratkin would make an ideal test subject. They started by replacing several of his limbs with bionic substitutes, which worked reasonably well (from their viewpoint, anyway). Things got complicated when they decided to stick a microprocessor in his skull, though. Integrating the hardware with existing wetware (that is, his brain) proved to be extremely traumatic, and if not for his innate regenerative capabilities the procedure surely would have killed him several times over. The process left him mentally unstable, and since Ratkin of his aspect (Engineer) aren't the picture of mental health to begin with the end result was a paranoid, temperamental, and generally crazy rat.

Headcase had a habit of escaping from his room, but since he remembered next to nothing about his previous life he didn't really know what to do with himself once he'd gotten out. He'd look around, play around with whatever he found, and eventually get recaptured by the researchers overseeing his project. This became a game of sorts, where the Ratkin would see how much trouble he could get into before his captors found him and the scientists would race to capture him before he caused too much trouble. On balance, he gave a little better than he got.

Headcase was eventually freed from his captivity by a pack of Glass Walkers, raiding the Pentex facility in an effort to shut it down. Since the Ratkin had nowhere to go, and would coincidentally be a superb weapon for use in electronic warfare, the Garou offered to give him a home. He doesn't get out much, but the Walkers gave him a nifty computer mainframe to play with so he usually manages to keep himself entertained. Usually.

Image: In contrast to most Ratkin Engineers, to say nothing of most Ratkin born from domestic rat stock, Headcase looks like a perfectly normal Norwegian brown rat. Or rather, that's what he *used* to look like, before his cybernetic implants turned him into a freak. Now he has bionic limbs in place of his legs and

one arm, as well as a nice, shiny dataport at the base of his skull (not to mention a bunch of cyberware *inside* his noggin). He can still shift forms, since the Glass Walkers awakened the spirits in the cyberware and helped him dedicate them, but since it's a painful process he avoids it if he can. He has three basic mood states: boredom, insane glee brought about by hacking a tough computer network, or terrified paranoia as he thinks of the scientists who made his life miserable.

Roleplaying Notes: You are a bitter, bitter rat. All Ratkin have a grudge against the world, but most haven't had the pleasure of having their limbs ripped off and their skull cracked open in the name of "science." You don't trust technology a bit, and you are *very* vocal about your opinions on the subject (don't ever, *ever*, turn your back on a computer. Damn things can't be trusted!). But hey, if you're stuck with this bionic crap you might as well use it to strike back at those who fucked with you in the first place, right? Stay close to the Garou who freed you from your confinement; they've given you the chance for revenge, and that makes them okay in your book (particularly since you give most "normal" Ratkin the willies).

Fathoms-Sea's-Mysteries, Rokea Mystic

Breed: Squamus
Auspice: Darkwater
Species: Silvertip
Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4
Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3
Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3
Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Expression 4, Dodge 3, Primal-Urge 3
Skills: Animal Ken 2, Crafts 4, Seafaring 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3
Knowledges: Enigmas 4, Investigation 3, Occult 4, Rituals 4
Backgrounds: Allies 3, Remora 4
Gifts: (1) Blood of the Deeps, Breach, Sense Threat, Teeth of the Skin; (2) Enter Sea's Soul, Gulp, Unsea's Blessing, Voice of the Depths; (3) Fathom Sight, Shark's Bones, Swim Through the School; (4) Safe Passage, Shockwave
Rage: 5; **Gnosis:** 9; **Willpower:** 7
Rank: 4
Rites: Rite of the Man Form, Rite of the Opened Grotto, Rite of the School's Wisdom, Rite of Sea's Distant Voice, Rite of Swimming Alone
Fetishes: Sea's Garb, Marlin's Tail
Merits and Flaws: Good Looking, Venerable

Background: Fathoms-Sea's-Mysteries is a venerable Rokea elder, one known for spending most of his

time alone. He spends nearly as much time on Unsea as in Sea, and this irritates many of the older, more traditional Rokea. Any objections they may have to his habits are quelled by the fact that he uses his knowledge to great effect, building bridges between the Rokea and the shapeshifters of Unsea and working with humans to help them learn to love and respect Sea. The Rokea may find his actions strange, but they cannot argue with results.

Fathoms-Sea's-Mysteries manages a maritime museum in Cairns, and he frequently organizes dive trips out to the Great Barrier Reef. The proceeds from such trips are funneled into initiatives to protect the reef or research efforts to understand the sea and its inhabitants.

Image: In Homid form, Fathoms-Sea's-Mysteries is an athletic, ruggedly handsome man who appears to be in his late 30s. He has dark hair and swarthy features, and dresses in typical fisherman's garb. In Squamus form, he is a typical silvertip shark. His Gladius form is surprisingly powerful, with no tail and a blunt snout.

Roleplaying Notes: You are a curious sort, and have always been far more interested in learning Sea's secrets than in fighting the dirtwalkers — or, for that matter, in socializing with other Rokea. You spend quite a bit of time on land, which makes the traditionalists among the Rokea angry. But you've been around

for a long time, and no wereshark with any sense would dare to call you a betweener. Always give others a chance to prove themselves, and remember that all things exist for a reason. That is why you are willing to help the Garou, and it is why your fellow Rokea respect you — whether they care to or not.

Unique Gift: Safe Passage (Level Four) — This unique Gift has a most unusual end — it is meant to bring the denizens of Unsea into the welcoming embrace of Sea. Affected individuals grow gills just as they would with the Level Three Dimwater Gift: Drown, and in addition they are inured to the crushing pressures and chill waters of the deep ocean, as though they had used the Level One Darkwater Gift: Blood of the Deeps.

System: The Rokea spends a Willpower point and rolls Gnosis (difficulty 10 - the target's Stamina). The target is able to breathe water and survive in the deep ocean for three hours per success. This Gift suffers the same limitations as the Level One Darkwater Gift: Blood of the Deeps. The target must be a willing recipient of the Gift for it to work.

Minions of the Weaver

Emperor Raiden, Drone Enforcer for Shinzui Industries

Breed: Homid
Auspice: Theurge
Tribe: formerly Glass Walkers
Physical: Strength 9, Dexterity 5, Stamina 9
Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 0
Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5
Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 5
Skills: Crafts 5, Firearms 3, Melee 4, Stealth 5
Knowledges: Computer 4, Investigation 4, Occult 3, Rituals 3, Science 5
Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 3, Device 5, Fetish 3, Resources 4, Symbiosis 5
Gifts: (1) Control Simple Machine, Diagnostics, Skyscraper Vision, Smell of Man, Spirit Speech; (2) Command the Spirit, Cybersenses, Jam Technology, Power Surge; (3) Control Complex Machine, Intrusion, Pulse of the Invisible
Powers: Computer Link, Invisibility, Magnetokinesis, Spirit Gift: Summon Net Spider, Triatic Sense
Autonomy: 7; **Gnosis:** 7; **Willpower:** 7
Rank: 3
Bionics/Cybernetics: Alloyed Endoskeleton (+2 Stamina), Bionic Forelimbs (+2 Strength), Reflex Filaments (+1 Dexterity)
Fetishes: Internal Raiden Unit
Equipment: Katana

Merits and Flaws: Local Ties (Corporate), True Symbiote

Background: Emperor Raiden began his life as a Boli Zouhisze Glass Walker, working closely with his sept in its efforts to defend Gaia in the Far East. But between Kuei Jin vampires, Black Spiral Dancer assaults, massive changes in the human world, and the ever-growing mass of humanity, Raiden and his brethren were at their wits' end. In Japan, a whisper of freedom called to them. It promised order and a sense of purpose, and an end to the confusion that had overtaken the world. It promised Clarification, and Raiden and a number of his septmates succumbed.

In the years since, Raiden has served as an enforcer of the highest order for Shinzui industries. While he sometimes misses his connection with Gaia, the clarity and purpose that now dominates his life more than makes up for the loss. Further, he is now able to interact freely with his Kin, as the terrible Rage within him has been quelled forever. Truly, who could ask for more?

Image: As befits his role as executioner, Emperor Raiden has only one form: Crinos. His is a lean and powerful frame, covered with bionic enhancements and yet streamlined and made whole by the Weaver's gift of Clarification. Raiden feels no Rage in battle; he is guided only by the Onesong, and its beauty leaves him feeling nothing but peace and contentment. Somehow, that makes his actions even creepier.

Roleplaying Notes: The Onesong guides your every thought and action. Speak with clarity of thought and purpose, and let nothing distract you from your assigned duties. Avoid interactions with others, as your present form frightens them. Instead, seek solace in your communion with the Weaver; let her guide you, and all will be well.

Stalks-the-Web, Tenere Drone

Breed: Arachnid
Faction: Tenere
Aspect: Secean
Physical: Strength 7, Dexterity 7, Stamina 6
Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0
Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Primal-Urge 3
Skills: Firearms 4, Stealth 3
Knowledges: Enigmas 3, Investigation 3, Occult 3
Backgrounds: Fetish 4
Gifts: (1) Jump, Open Seal, Patience of Ananasa, Stolen Moments, Web Haven; (2) Burrow, Camouflage, Morphean Bite
Powers: Dispersion, Invulnerability (+5)
Blood Pool: 10; **Autonomy:** 7; **Gnosis:** 5; **Willpower:** 7
Rank: 2
Fetishes: Blood Conversion Weapons Platform

Equipment: Two Armalite-Steyr AS-115 assault rifles w/ underslung M203 grenade launchers

Background: While the Weaver is pleased with the apparent devotion of the Tenere Ananasi to the goal of global Clarification, the supernal has nonetheless found that having somewhat less… autonomous werespiders at her beck and call is a bit more satisfying. Since the Ananasi are already more vulnerable to the beauty of the Onesong than most, it was a fairly trivial matter to convince a number of the beasts to undergo the process of Clarification. Stalks-the-Web's case was no exception. Her life as a Tenere has been left behind; she serves the Weaver now, and has no interest whatsoever in anything else.

Image: Stalks is locked in Pithus form, and hence looks like a huge tarantula the size of a Buick. She wears a pair of assault rifles loaded with silver ammunition, each tied to a blood-fed fetish harness that lets her convert blood into ammunition for the weapons. In extremis, or when she needs to cross the Gauntlet, she can fragment into a mass of spiders, similar to the Ananasi Crawlerling form. These small spiders look like perfect, mechanized black widows, each identical to the others in every way.

Roleplaying Notes: Your devotion to the Weaver is absolute. Destroy her enemies without mercy, and do everything in your power to calcify the wall separating the physical and spiritual worlds. Do not waste time on petty things like emotion; these things only disrupt the soul, and distract the individual from the beauty of the Onesong.

Drone Assault Team

Sample Soldier Drone

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 8, Stamina 6
Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Talents: Alertness 3, Dodge 4
Skills: Firearms 5, Leadership 4, Repair 2, Stealth 4
Knowledges: Computer 4
Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Device 4, Resources 2, Symbiosis 3
Powers: Computer Link, Enhanced Ability (Dexterity) x4, Enhanced Ability (Stamina) x3, Invulnerability (+3), Regeneration
Autonomy: 7; **Willpower:** 7
Equipment: Armalite-Steyr AS-115 Assault Rifle w/ 4 clips silver ammo and IMI Vanguard Gyrojet Pistol; alternately, silver-alloyed Myrmidon Exoskeleton

Background: Once a rarity among Shinzui's forces, Soldier Drones have become much more common now that the Garou have been marked for extermination. These Drones are the essence of the Machine: ruthlessly efficient, coldly unemotional, always pragmatic. They are among the most dangerous units in the Weaver's arsenal,

if for no other reason than the fact that they are designed to exploit the Garou's weaknesses without fail. Small wonder, then, that they have managed to dismantle nearly every werewolf pack they've encountered.

Image: Soldier Drones dress for maximum efficiency, eschewing any look, clothing, or equipment that does not directly relate to her current mission. They have become cold and emotionless, ideal soldiers — they live only for their orders, only to serve their mistress and to usher in the new world order promised by the Weaver and her Onesong.

Roleplaying Notes: The mission is all that matters. Pay no attention to distractions, and do not tolerate inefficiency from those around you. The Onesong and its call for Clarification give you all that you could possibly desire; the beauty and purity it offers makes all other concerns meaningless.

Bricklayer Drone

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2
Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 5, Appearance 2
Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Talents: Athletics 3, Dodge 4
Skills: Stealth 4
Knowledges: Computer 3, Investigation 4, Occult 5
Backgrounds: Device 4, Resources 3, Symbiosis 3
Powers: Computer Link, Homogeneity, Invisibility, Regeneration, Spirit Static, Stasis Touch, Triatic Sense
Autonomy: 7; **Willpower:** 7
Equipment: Raiden Unit

Background: Bricklayer Drones are the Weaver's primary foci of control in the physical world. They ensure that the world around us remains in a static and unchanging state, and they mitigate the often considerable abilities of Awakened creatures in the World of Darkness. While their personal power is often unimpressive, bricklayers working in tandem with soldiers can prove to be devastating opponents.

Image: Bricklayer Drones tend to have bland features, largely because appearance plays no part in their duties. They move with the strength of purpose and economy of motion one might expect from a Weaver child, and they rarely travel alone.

Roleplaying Notes: Maintain the beautiful lie that is reality at any cost. You are very much a team player; make efforts to aid your fellow Drones, particularly the soldiers, whenever possible. Speak and move only when necessary, and do not waste energy worrying about things that cannot be helped.

Reassurance Drone

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2
Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Talents: Empathy 4, Expression 3, Subterfuge 4
Skills: Leadership 3, Performance 4
Knowledges: Computer 1, Investigation 4
Backgrounds: Resources 2, Symbiosis 3
Powers: Computer Link, Enchanting Voice, Matter Weave, Memory Caress, Reassuring Presence, Regeneration, Silent Speech, Spirit Gift: Persuasion, Voice of Reason
Autonomy: 7; **Willpower:** 7

Background: While bricklayer Drones are forces of control during crisis, reassurance Drones restore control once the crisis has been contained. They repair damage done to buildings and structures, and soothe a troubled populace when its members have seen things they shouldn't have. Their soothing words keep a wayward humanity under control, allowing their more martial brethren to operate without constraints.

Image: Perfectly designed in every way, reassurance Drones are often achingly beautiful. Their beauty has a distant air to it, however, and this gives the Drones an aloof quality that is at odds with their tantalizing exterior. Reassurances dress so as to easily blend into crowds.

Roleplaying Notes: You have heard the Onesong, and its beauty has brought peace to your soul. Now you must share that beauty with others, so that they will understand the purity of the Weaver's way just as you do. Speak gently to all you encounter, but take care that no one gets too close to you emotionally. Your interest lies with calming the flock, not making friends.

Wyrmspawn
The Perfect Metis, Possessed Black Spiral Dancer

Breed: Metis
Auspice: Ahroun
Tribe: Black Spiral Dancers
Physical: Strength 8 (10/12/11/9), Dexterity 6 (6/7/8/8), Stamina 8 (10/11/11/10)
Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 5 (4/0/5/5)
Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5
Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Intimidation 5
Skills: Leadership 5, Melee 5
Knowledges: Enigmas 5, Occult 5, Rituals 5
Backgrounds: Allies 5, Consecrated 5, Fetish 5, Rites 5, Symbiosis 5
Gifts: (1) Bane Protector, Inspiration, Sense Wyrm; (2) Horns of the Impaler, Spirit of the Fray, Wyrm Hide; (3) Combat Healing, Dagger of the Mind; (4)

Open Wounds, Stoking Fury's Furnace; (5) Avatar of the Wyrm

Powers: Enhanced Attributes (+3 Strength, +1 Dexterity, +3 Stamina), Horror (supernatural version), Sense Gaia, Thick Skin x 5, Triatic Sense, Voice of the Wyrm

Rage: 10; **Gnosis:** 10; **Willpower:** 10

Rank: 6

Rites: As appropriate.

Fetishes: As appropriate.

Merits and Flaws: Huge Size, Iron Will

Taints: None

Background: The Perfect Metis was born hale and hearty to a pair of Gaian Garou, who were forced to wonder just what such an unusual event might portend. Some of their brethren feared the child would become the champion of the Wyrm, and they were not wrong. Others wondered if he might in fact be the means of Gaia's deliverance, and they also spoke true. Everything was as the Garou believed, but none of it was true.

Shortly after his birth, the metis was spirited away by a Ferectoi named Adrian Carver. He watched over the child as an avatar of the Wyrm possessed it, shaping it into the instrument of the Wyrm's will on the physical plane. But the child's destiny was not one of defilement or corruption; instead, he represents the last hope of the Wyrm to free itself from the shackles of the Weaver, and to that end he is an instrument of war.

Once the possession of the metis was complete, the child returned to the world fully grown, and set about consolidating the Wyrm's forces in the physical realm. All who oppose him will be destroyed. Those who recognize the purity of his purpose and the necessity of his existence, however, will be able to redress the greatest tragedy in all creation: the Weaver's descent into madness, and the corruption of the conquering Wyrm.

Image: In Homid form the Perfect Metis is a huge bear of a man, with powerful limbs that bristle with strength far beyond that of any human. He has a savagely handsome countenance, and while he projects almost no sort of sexual aura, it would take little effort to make him quite attractive. His wolf form is savage and majestic, an unsettling blend of the Wyrm's fury and the beauty of perfection. He is faster and stronger and more powerful than any wolf who ever lived, and all who look upon him cannot help but feel a sense of awe at the sight of him. In Crinos form the metis is a true giant, standing well over twelve feet tall and typically adorned with a massive pair of horns that he uses in combat to great effect. Those who see him in this form know that his supremacy is unquestioned, and a mere glance from him is enough to cow any Garou into submission.

Roleplaying Notes: The power of the Wyrm stirs within you, calling to you to fulfill your purpose in life. You seek nothing less than the end of all existence, as the Weaver's Pattern Web is unraveled and the Wyrm is freed from its eternal prison. Some may oppose your efforts, but they are nothing to you; crush them if you must, but those with a greater clarity of vision are your primary concern. You need the help of the Gaian Garou if your quest is to be successful; try to work with them and do not allow your subordinates to complicate matters with meaningless squabbles. You are the instrument of creation's rebirth; all other concerns are secondary.

Adrian Carver

Type: Fomori (Ferectoi)

Physical: Strength 7, Dexterity 5, Stamina 7

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 5, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Drive 2, Etiquette 5, Firearms 3, Leadership 5, Melee 2, Performance 4

Knowledges: Computer 2, Enigmas 5, Investigation 4, Law 3, Linguistics 2, Medicine 4, Occult 5, Politics 5, Rituals 5, Science 5

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Consecrated 4, Contacts 5, Fetish 5, Resources 5, Symbiosis 5

Powers: Berserker, Enhanced Attributes (+2 Strength, +2 Stamina), Gaseous Form, Immunity to the Delirium, Invulnerability (+5), Spirit Rending, Spirit Sense, Spirit Ties

Autonomy: 5; **Rage:** 7; **Gnosis:** 7; **Willpower:** 5

Fetishes and Talens: Tambertail's Heart, Pretanic Talisman (5 charges), Storm in a Bottle

Equipment: Glock 17, three clips silver bullets

Taints: Bane Attractor, Derangements (Grandeur, Sadism), Harsh Tenant (4), Urges (Domination)

Merits and Flaws: Corporate CEO, Hidden Power, True Symbiote

Background: All Ferectoi have a purpose in life, and Adrian Carver's is remarkable not only for its scope but also for its clandestine nature. None of the Wyrm's other minions is aware of Carver's significance; indeed, even the various aspects of the Triatic Wyrm themselves are unaware of his true purpose. But he is a Ferectoi, and so the Wyrm's children have always indulged him. No desire went unfulfilled, no matter how outlandish; that is the way of things, and that is how it has always been.

Until recently, Carver's behavior and attitudes were fairly typical of a Ferectoi: he was cruel and sadistic almost beyond words, a perfect example of the corruption of Wyrm. But one day, he demanded that Kiro Yamazaki, director of Pentex's Project: Odyssey, give him a number of that project's most gifted creations. He demanded powerful and obscure equipment, and he began to make preparations for a project of staggering proportions. And he did all of this without a word of explanation, as though the concerns of the Wyrm's other servants were beneath his notice.

But then, how can such things matter when you have been chosen for the greatest role in history? How can such things matter when you are to be attendant to the Wyrm himself?

Image: Carver was born to a background of wealth and privilege, and he conducts himself accordingly. He dresses in the finest clothing available to him, treats others as his moral and spiritual inferiors, and wears his status with a confidence bordering on arrogance. Opponents often underestimate him, thinking him a mere human, and he plays up this supposed vulnerability at every opportunity.

Roleplaying Notes: You're destined for greatness, whether anyone else cares to acknowledge that fact or not. Always assume the people around you are imbeciles — it's true more often than not, and you like to watch them squirm. Take care to ensure that no harm befalls the Perfect Metis; the Bane within you cares for nothing else, and he is a harsh master. It is monstrously difficult to contain your terrible urges, but to indulge in what a Bane craves would jeopardize the Perfect Metis' plan, and so you must suffer quietly, always dreaming of what you could but do with these Garou's soft, soft flesh…

The Fomori of Project Odyssey

Jonas Quinn

Physical: Strength 7, Dexterity 3, Stamina 8

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 1, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Talents: Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Dodge 2

Skills: Drive 4, Performance 3

Knowledges: Investigation 4

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Equipment 1, Resources 3

Powers: Armored Hide, Berserker, Bulky, Enhanced Attribute (Stamina) x3, Immunity to the Delirium, Thick-Skinned x4, Unnatural Strength

Autonomy: 6; **Rage:** 8; **Willpower:** 6

Equipment: Silver Knuckles

Taints: Addiction (Super Vitamin Diet, 4 points), Harsh Tenant (4 points), Spirit Reflection

Merits and Flaws: Hidden Power

Background: Jonas Quinn was always a classic second stringer in high school; he was cool enough to hang with the jocks, but never talented enough to be considered major league. That all changed when he started the Super Vitamin Diet regimen, a dubious series

of energy supplements developed by Panacea Pharmaceuticals. Designed to trigger the latent potential of dormant psychics, the Super Vitamin Diet worked wonders for Jonas. He was transformed into an A-list athlete nearly overnight, and his popularity in school soared. Sadly, the FDA ultimately deemed the Super Vitamin Diet regimen unsafe, and Panacea had to discontinue production of the drugs. News of this development sent Jonas into a berserk frenzy, and he tore apart half of his school before law enforcement officials managed to detain him.

Alerted to Jonas' existence by a television newscast, Kiro Yamazaki, director of Pentex's Project: Odyssey special operations program, arranged to have Jonas transferred to private custody so that his "medical condition" might be studied and properly treated. Yamazaki offered to feed Jonas' addiction, provided the boy agreed to work as a special "consultant" for Pentex. Overjoyed at the chance to join the big leagues, Jonas eagerly accepted Yamazaki's offer, and has been working for Pentex, and specifically for Adrian Carver, ever since.

Image: In contrast to most fomori, Jonas can actually pass for human most of the time. He tends to wear T-shirts and jeans when he can get away with it, but otherwise dresses in conservative business outfits. In battle form, his psychic talents manifest themselves physically, transforming him into a hulking brute of a fomor. His muscles bulge with unnatural power, and his skin takes on a tough, leathery texture that is capable of shrugging off even werewolf claws with no real injury. He always wears his silver knuckles in combat, since they give him a deadly edge over the only creatures that can really hurt him—shapeshifters.

Roleplaying Notes: You're dumb as a box of rocks, but that's okay — you're tough as hell and you've got a good gig going with Pentex, so who needs smarts? Smile like you're ready to tear people apart, especially when that happens to be the case — it's always fun to scare the hell outta some poor bastard before you pick him to pieces. Stay out of trouble when Carver's around — he's about the only person you've ever met who gives you the willies, and you have a feeling there's a good reason for that.

Celeste Montoya

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2
Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 2, Appearance 8
Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Talents: Empathy 4, Intimidation 3, Subterfuge 5
Skills: Etiquette 3, Performance 4
Knowledges: Politics 4
Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Equipment 1, Resources 3

Powers: Enhanced Attribute (Appearance) x3, Horror (7 points), Immunity to the Delirium, Sanity Rending, Succubus' Veil
Autonomy: 7; **Willpower:** 4
Taints: Addiction (Siren Cosmetics, 4 points)
Merits and Flaws: Spirit's Mark

Background: Being plain was never this Jane's style, but nature didn't seem to agree with her. She was born plain and boring, and nothing she tried during her formative years could make her into the beautiful woman she knew she was destined to be. Nothing, that is, until she tried Siren Cosmetics — they made her attractive and interesting all right, or so all the men said. Celeste enjoyed the attention at first, but the crazy psychic feedback and powers weren't what she had in mind. She stopped using the makeup, only to discover to her horror that it contained a toxin that would make her sick (and eventually kill her) if she ever stopped using it for good. Distraught, she wrote to the manufacturer, who eventually put her in touch with Adrian Carver.

Impressed by her supernatural abilities, Carver offered Celeste a deal: she would continue to use the makeup and would work for him as a special "consultant," and he would help her moderate the effects of both the makeup and her newfound psychic abilities. Celeste just wanted to go back to being her plain old self, but that was no longer an option. What could she do? She'd gotten her wish, and now it looked like she'd have to live with it, like it or not.

Image: Celeste is a gorgeous woman who appears to be in her late teens or early twenties. She has embraced the hand fate has dealt her, and uses her appearance and her abilities to maximum effect. She dresses in supremely provocative outfits, paying little heed to such niceties as modesty or decorum. She likes to shock people, especially if it entertains her in the process.

Roleplaying Notes: The potency of your gifts has given you a rather callous attitude toward people in general and men in particular. You very much want something real in your life, but you since you can never have it you might as well get as much mileage out of the people around you as you can. Your peers in the Odyssey project mainly disgust you. Adrian Carver, however, scares the shit out of you (mainly because you're pretty sure he isn't even remotely human). You mostly do what you're told, and if you can have a little fun on the side then so much the better.

Sebastian

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3
Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 7, Appearance 2
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 6
Talents: Empathy 4, Intimidation 5, Subterfuge 2
Skills: Etiquette 4
Knowledges: Enigmas 4, Linguistics 3
Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Equipment 1, Resources 3
Powers: Enhanced Attributes (Manipulation x2, Wits x2), Immunity to the Delirium, Memory Caress, Mind Blast, Mind Rape, Nightmare Command, Veil Breach
Autonomy: 7; **Willpower**: 5
Taints: Addiction (brains, 4 points), Teledementia
Merits and Flaws: Iron Will

Background: Sebastian began his life as a sensitive, reclusive soul. He had a tendency to keep to himself, and was never very good at making friends. He found this state of affairs depressing, but it was sheer bliss compared to what happened when his mental powers erupted shortly after the onset of puberty. He found himself bombarded by the thoughts of others on a regular basis, and the trauma of being a receiver of this sort slowly drove him insane. Any pretense of normalcy in his life was washed away, and he would have been doomed to spend the rest of his life in an insane asylum if not for the intervention of Kiro Yamazaki and Project: Odyssey.

It would be a mistake to say that Sebastian feels indebted to the project for saving his sanity, given the fact that his current endeavors are nothing short of horrifying. But now at least he has a sense of purpose, and he has to admit that the brain food he's been given has kept the worst of the dementia at bay. He is still bombarded by annoying babble on a regular basis, but he can nonetheless function in society with no real difficulty. He's thankful for that, if nothing else.

Image: Sebastian is nothing to look at, and his grooming habits don't help his appearance any. His dour wardrobe reflects his perpetually stormy mood, and if he owns anything that isn't black or grey his teammates in Project: Odyssey have yet to see it. He could pass for a halfway decent human being if he put some effort into the matter, but since he's usually preoccupied with the (very real) voices in his head he doesn't really see the point.

Roleplaying Notes: You hate everyone, and you aren't afraid to say so. You know all their dirty little secrets, all the stupid shit that's prattling on in their heads when they think nobody's listening, and most of the time you're tempted to blast someone or other into oblivion just to get them to shut up. You'd love to tell Carver to go to hell, but you get the impression that that's really not a good idea. Even if he seems weak-willed, you're pretty sure he could fuck you up on a moment's notice if he cared to. So, you obey his orders. For now.

The Ananasi

Larius, Atahsaia Guardian

Breed: Arachnid
Aspect: Secean
Faction: Tenere
Physical: Strength 5 (8/9/0), Dexterity 4 (7/6/10), Stamina 5 (7/8/0)
Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 4 (3/1/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/0)
Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5
Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Empathy 3, Intimidation 5, Primal-Urge 5
Skills: Animal Ken 3, Etiquette 2, Melee 4, Stealth 5, Survival 5
Knowledges: Enigmas 5, Investigation 4, Medicine 4, Occult 5, Rituals 5
Backgrounds: Fetish 5, Resources 3
Gifts: (1) Jump, Open Seal, Patience of Ananasa; (2) Camouflage, Hand Fangs, Might of Ananasa, Morphean Bite, Replenishment of the Flesh, Spines; (3) Blood Pump, Cling, Spinnerets, Tick Body, Venom Bite; (4) Blood Hunt, Carapace, Entropic Bite, Understanding the Tapestry; (5) Spider on the Mirror, Thousand Hands, Umbral Barrier
Blood Pool: 25; **Gnosis:** 10; **Willpower:** 8
Rank: 5

Rites: None
Merits and Flaws: Crawlerling Alteration, Hive Mind, Huge Size

Background: Larius' role in the Ananasi master plan is one of great esteem: he is to guard the Atahsaia, the metis-breed Ananasi, and ensure that they are well fed once they are freed from their amber prisons. It is this latter concern that will likely bring him into contact with the Garou, as he roves the Umbra "collecting" meals for his precious little monsters. Most of the Ovid would be horrified if they knew of his duties, but their concerns are ultimately of little importance. After all, if they had a better way to deal with the mess everyone's in now, the Atahsaia wouldn't have been necessary to begin with.

Image: Larius is a huge werespider, a trait emphasized by the fact that he spends most of his time in his Lilian form. His Lilian body plan is much like that of a centaur, with two pairs of legs used for locomotion and the remainder used for grasping and manipulating objects. He is covered in coarse brown fur like that of a tarantula, and his carapace is jet black.

Roleplaying Notes: The Atahsaia are your only concern. If they are to be effective in battle they must have an ample food supply, and you are only too happy to provide it. More than a few Garou have fallen victim to your claws, but you can't get terribly worked up about it. After all, they might as well serve some purpose in the greater scheme of things, rather than just slaughtering all they encounter. Avoid interactions with others if you can help it; you have better things to do with your time.

The Atahsaia

Physical: Strength 12, Dexterity 8, Stamina 10
Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 3
Skills: Animal Ken 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4
Knowledges: Investigation 4, Occult 2
Gifts: (1) Balance, Jump, Open Seal, Patience of Ananasa, Resist Pain, Resist Toxin, Wyrmling Kinship; (2) Camouflage, Might of Ananasa, Morphean Bite, Replenishment of the Flesh, Spines, True Fear; (3) Blood Pump, Cling, Corrupt, Part Webs, Tick Body, Venom Bite
Powers: Horror (as the Possessed Power, supernatural version), Touch of Corruption (unweaving)
Blood Pool: 30; **Gnosis:** 7; **Willpower**: 7

Background: The Atahsaia are the monstrous progeny that result from the union of two Ananasi. Ever since the first Atahsaia tore itself free from its egg sac, the elders among the Ananasi have striven to keep them hidden away in the farthest reaches of the Deep Umbra. Some

Ananasi believe that the Atahsaia are the chosen warriors of Queen Ananasa, her elite guard meant to tip the balance of the fates in the world's Final Days. This isn't far from the truth; now, during the midst of the Apocalypse, the Atahsaia are free of their amber prisons, released to roam about the Umbra slaughtering any of the Weaver's minions they can find. They are tearing the fabric of the Pattern Web to pieces, and while their movements are chaotic one thing is certain — they are converging on Malfeas, apparently intent on finding their queen and releasing her from her opal prison. The only question that remains is whether or not the Garou will stand in their way.

Image: The Atahsaia are truly horrific to behold, yet somehow glorious at the same time. Each appears to be a Pithus-form werespider the size of a small house, and they are lightning fast despite their great size. Cosmetic details such as color, hair, spider breed, and so on vary considerably from individual to individual, but all are monstrous enough that they invoke the Delirium even in supernatural beings (though Ananasi are immune to this effect).

Roleplaying Notes: You are the personification of death and destruction, and you care for nothing in life but serving your queen and destroying all who would oppose her. Let no one stand in the way of your goal; find your queen, and release her from her prison!

Unique Abilities: Atahsaia invoke the Delirium in supernatural beings just as Garou invoke it in humans. Note that supernatural beings and normal humans alike may roll Wits + Occult to move up on the Delirium chart as normal. Further, the Atahsaia may unweave any supernatural effect simply by rolling Dexterity + Gnosis (difficulty 7). If the Atahsaia rolls more successes than the effect's creator, it is banished. This has no effect on the powers of Incarnae and more powerful spirits.

Rites

The Rite of Dragon Awakening (Mystic)

This rite allows the ritemaster to awaken a Zmei. This is almost certainly a foolish act, since the Zmei are engines of pure destruction with no allegiance to anyone whatsoever. Controlling the dragon is flatly impossible, and it will likely eat the ritemaster as soon as look at her. But these are the End Times, so drastic measures are sometimes necessary.

System: Once the ritemaster has found the Zmei, she makes an extended Wits + Occult roll (difficulty 7). The dragon awakes after she scores 23 successes. Once the Zmei awakens, it attempts to drain every supernatural being present of their Gnosis; each character can

make an opposed Willpower roll (difficulty for each equal to the opponent's Willpower) to resist. Those who successfully resist will likely be eaten. The Zmei then flies off to wreak havoc in its own special way.

Fetishes

Blood Conversion Weapons Platform

Level 4, Gnosis 7

This potent fetish, primarily used by Stalks-the-Web but also found in other Ananasi, uses the werespider's blood pool to replenish the ammunition stores of one or more weapons mounted on the platform. The werespider simply pays one blood point per weapon, and it is considered fully reloaded with standard ammunition for its type. If the Ananasi pays two blood points, the ammunition stores can be of a specialized type (such as silver or gold; note that the ammunition does not exist until the fetish transforms the blood prior to the round being fired, meaning this is not an efficient way to make money). Some weapons, such as flamethrowers, might not be compatible with this fetish (Storyteller's discretion).

Vulcan AEI 3.0

Level 5, Gnosis 8

This advanced developer's environment is the ultimate expression of the Vulcan Affordance Engineering Interface. Once installed, the software's high-level command language gives its user total and complete control over any firmware/software-driven system. Further, it allows the user to connect to *any* system networked to the primary system — thus allowing the user unlimited access to any system that is part of the World Wide Web. This may include such diverse systems as a cellular telephone network, internal LANs with satellite uplinks, and virtually any other system that is not completely isolated from the outside world. The user cannot, however, access all of these systems at once; he can only control one at a time, but control is total while the user concentrates on accessing that system.

Computer Interface Bioware

Device 5

This cybernetic modification, known to exist only in the head of the Ratkin known as Headcase (the poor bastard), is a neural microprocessor that connects directly to the brain stem. It includes a dataport that can connect directly to any network-capable computer processor, and it also acts as a firewall separating the user's brain from any systems he is currently accessing. The benefits are simple, yet potent — all computer-related difficulties are halved so long as the user is connected to the computer in question.

Ragnarok

Merits and Flaws

In an Apocalypse-based chronicle, some Merits and Flaws are useless. For example, the Sterile/Barren Flaw from **Mokolé** and **Kinfolk: Unsung Heroes**, isn't even close to a Flaw — there won't be time to have children anyway, so it's not a disadvantage to be unable to do so.

Memory Palace (1-7 point Merit)

This Merit is for any creature with Mnesis: Mokolé, some Nagah, a few Ratkin and one or two Garou. It is an expansion of the Yathamaya Merit in **Mokolé**. A Memory Palace is a construct of living memory that holds other memories inside it. Although stored within the owner's mind, it can also be accessed through the memory realms of the High Umbra. In their memory palaces, anyone possessing Mnesis may store Gifts, Rites, Knowledges and skills, as well as many memories. No one can get at this information without the consent of the owner. For each level of this Merit, the owner may store memories from one living being (these can be transferred through the Rite of Anamnesis), three Knowledges or Skills, or one Gift or rite. These items are in addition to those that the owner knows normally. However, to use the items from a memory palace, the owner must make a Mnesis roll in addition to normal rolls for the Gift, rite or ability. This is to reflect the difficulty in accessing this unusual form of memory.

Kinslayer (2 point Flaw)

You are doomed to slay your family, both Garou and Kin. This may include your pack, parents and siblings, or any others who are close to you. Whether or not you intend to kill them, it will happen and cause suffering and horror.

This may happen at the beginning of the chronicle, making you an outcast, or at the end, as the Apocalypse is raging. In either case, you become infamous among the Garou.

This is a form of the Dark Fate Flaw, and you may not take both together.

New Gifts

• **Gift of the Giants (Level Five)** — The Garou knew this Gift in the First Times, but only the Mokolé remember it now. Mammoth or Elephant teaches this Gift (and so the Mokolé cannot learn it save through Mnesis).

System: The user spends a Gnosis point and becomes the largest creature in the scene, whether they are in battle, at a rite, or simply hunting. The Garou is bigger than the next biggest character, so allow 1 extra point of each Physical Attribute beyond the attributes of the next largest character. Note that if multiple characters

use this, then it only works once for each Gnosis point spent. This is different from the Fianna: Gift of the Spriggan in that the Garou may not increase very much in size, or (around Mokolé, huge Gurahl, and so on) may become gigantic indeed.

If multiple Garou in one scene use this Gift, then each must spend twice as much Gnosis (two, four, then eight points for each successive use of the Gift by an individual) to become larger than the others. This can go on until all are out of Gnosis.

• **Myth Walking (Level Five)** — Myth and dream walk among the Garou. This Gift, preserved by the Mokolé in the form of the Gift: Dream Semblance, enables the loyal descendants of the ancestor-heroes to return them to the world. It is taught by an ancestor-spirit, or by the Mokolé.

System: The Garou spends two permanent Gnosis points and prays to the greatest hero of their breed, tribe, etc. The hero, if well pleased with the Garou's prayer, manifests in the Garou's own body. The Garou visibly transforms into the hero's own self, retaining her own personality mixed with the memories and attributes of the hero. Thus a Shadow Lord might manifest Ivan Tsarevitch, the Children of Gaia see the return of Lore-Speaker Gron, while the Get of Fenris transform into the great wolves of Norse myth. Only one Garou at a time may become any given hero, and this Gift can be invoked only once in a Garou's lifetime. Indeed, many who invoke it do not survive doing so. The powers of the hero are determined by the Storyteller, but should be suitable to the hero's legendary self. Shu-Horus, for example, would be a great warrior, but would have no knowledge of electronics.

Wyrm Gift

• **Landwaster (Level Three)** — This Wyrm Gift allows the fallen tribe to steal life in order to gain Gnosis. Relshab the Faceless Eater (see Book of the Wyrm) teaches this Gift.

System: The Garou kills a living thing of their own mass or greater, whether this is a mother and her children, a redwood tree, or a buffalo. The killing must involve physical contact between the Garou and his victim. For each living thing killed, the Dancer gains one Gnosis. One additional Gnosis is gained when an intelligent creature dies in pain. Any Gaian Garou using this Gift is considered to have fallen to the Wyrm.

Fetishes

Catchpot

Level 2, Gnosis 2

This pot is made in a traditional African or American folk style and is animated by a cat-spirit. Mokolé, Bastet, and Kin use it to keep secrets.

When placed against the inside of a door or at the entrance to a meeting, the matters discussed inside the room are not audible to anyone outside (or at least an unintelligible mumble is all that can be heard). Any use of magic to penetrate the silence shatters the pot, as does any discussion in the meeting of truly blasphemous or horrific evil.

Flaming Death Spears

Level 3, Gnosis 6

These rare spears are forged from calcified spirit-webbing, knapped from the obsidian that erupts from the Jaws of the True Father, or polished from Wyldstones. They are aligned with the Weaver, the Wyld or the Wyrm. The Garou, Gaian or otherwise, who create them name them after the Death Spears of the Prophecy of the Phoenix. A war-spirit is bound into them.

The spears do lethal damage to anyone and aggravated damage to the enemies of the maker: a Wyld-spear damages servants of the Weaver and the Wyrm, a Wyrm-spear cruelly wounds servants of Gaia, and so on. They may also be used in the rite: Flaming Death Spears.

Resounding Urns

Level 3, Gnosis 6

These bronze or porcelain urns were used of old by the Mokolé elders in a Gather to make speeches resonate. Some few have survived, in the hands of Mokolé, Bastet or Garou (often the Silent Striders). They are animated by a cuckoo-spirit.

The user first empowers the Urn with one or more Gnosis points. If these are points from a Gnosis pool, effects last for one scene. If permanent Gnosis is used, the effects last for the whole story. For each point of Gnosis used, the dice pool of any speaker increases by 1, whether persuading, commanding, or performing a spoken rite.

Womb of Time

Level 4, Gnosis 7

This fetish appears to be a crystal sphere with flaws; as the holder gazes upon sphere, the flaws seem to be in the shapes of humans, animals, or spirits. It contains the life-power of one or more species. A Theurge must animate it with a spirit of procreation, such as Termite or Jellyfish, and then touch it to the body of a fertile being while the Theurge spends 1 permanent Gnosis. The power to reproduce passes into the Womb of Time and the being will have one fewer offspring (for most, this does not matter much). The shapeshifters who create these seeks to give as many of these jewels as possible to those whom they deem likely to survive the Apocalypse.

The Womb allows a future being to have that child instead. Although this fetish is costly and fragile, its usefulness does not come until the New Time after the Apocalypse. In that time (if indeed it ever comes) species may be reborn. Indeed, the eldest Mokolé hint at the existence of "time-eggs" remaining from previous End Times.

New Talens

Hell-paint

Gnosis 5

Hell-paint is a potent talen, one so powerful that few Garou can resist it. This pigment, a liquid or powder, is available from an unknown source, and many tribes have used it. It is painted onto the face and other body parts so as to be visible during battle. It is animated by a war-spirit.

The paint gives the Garou double her normal Rage (to a maximum of 10), although Rage is still refreshed at the normal rate. Unfortunately, this also makes the Garou more likely to frenzy. The Storyteller should make all Rage rolls for a Garou using this talen. Frenzies occur with three or more successes, not four. Spending Willpower does not stop the frenzy.

Should the Garou get five successes or more, she falls into the Thrall of the Wyrm. Each time the character frenzies, whether or not she falls into the Thrall of the Wyrm, the paint gains 1 more die of Strength. The Storyteller should keep track of how many times the player frenzies. The painted design sinks deeper and deeper into her skin, until she appears to have a horrible tattoo on her face even in Homid form. Lupus appear to have disfiguring blotches on their muzzles. The only way to remove the paint is with the blood of a Garou. One health level's worth of blood must be used for each die of strength that the paint has. At first, Garou may slash their faces with their claws, gouging out enough blood to wash off the evil paint. Once the character has frenzied a few times, she must kill other Garou to get enough blood to wash the paint off. Of course, trying to get the blood is likely to lead to even more frenzies.

In fact, this talen is made by the Black Spirals from the glands of Garou whom they vivisect. Although it is not overtly Wyrm-tainted, a canny Theurge could discover its origin.

There are rumors that even Kinfolk can gain Rage from using this talen. This rumor is of great interest to the Skin-Dancers, who wish to get as much of this paint as they can. Of course, this would lead to even more conflict between Skin-Dancers and Garou.

Luna-Dust

Gnosis 4

The Shattering of Luna releases powerful magic, healing the wounded Mother. Luna-Dust is a part of this, and this talen can be found only where pieces of Luna have fallen after the Shattering. It is gray, has a slight gunpowder smell, and sticks to itself and to earthly things. A Lune animates it.

Anyone who finds some Luna-Dust may spread it on himself or over a small area: for each point of dust, enough is available to cover one person or an area for him to stand or sit in. In that area, the Gauntlet is 1. If a person spreads it on himself, then the Gauntlet is 1 for him no matter where he is, until he steps sideways, bathes or showers. Heavy rain also washes off the dust.

Teeth of the True Father

Gnosis 5

The Jaws of the True Father spew forth many horrors, and this lava-like stone is one of them. This obsidian can be knapped into knives, spears and arrow points that cause aggravated damage to Gaian creatures, but only lethal damage for the children of the Wyrm. It can also be polished into "smoking mirrors" which reflect the evil in anyone's soul. Thus, an innocent cub would see nothing, while many old Gaian warriors would see the evil that they have done, and how it affects them.

Rites

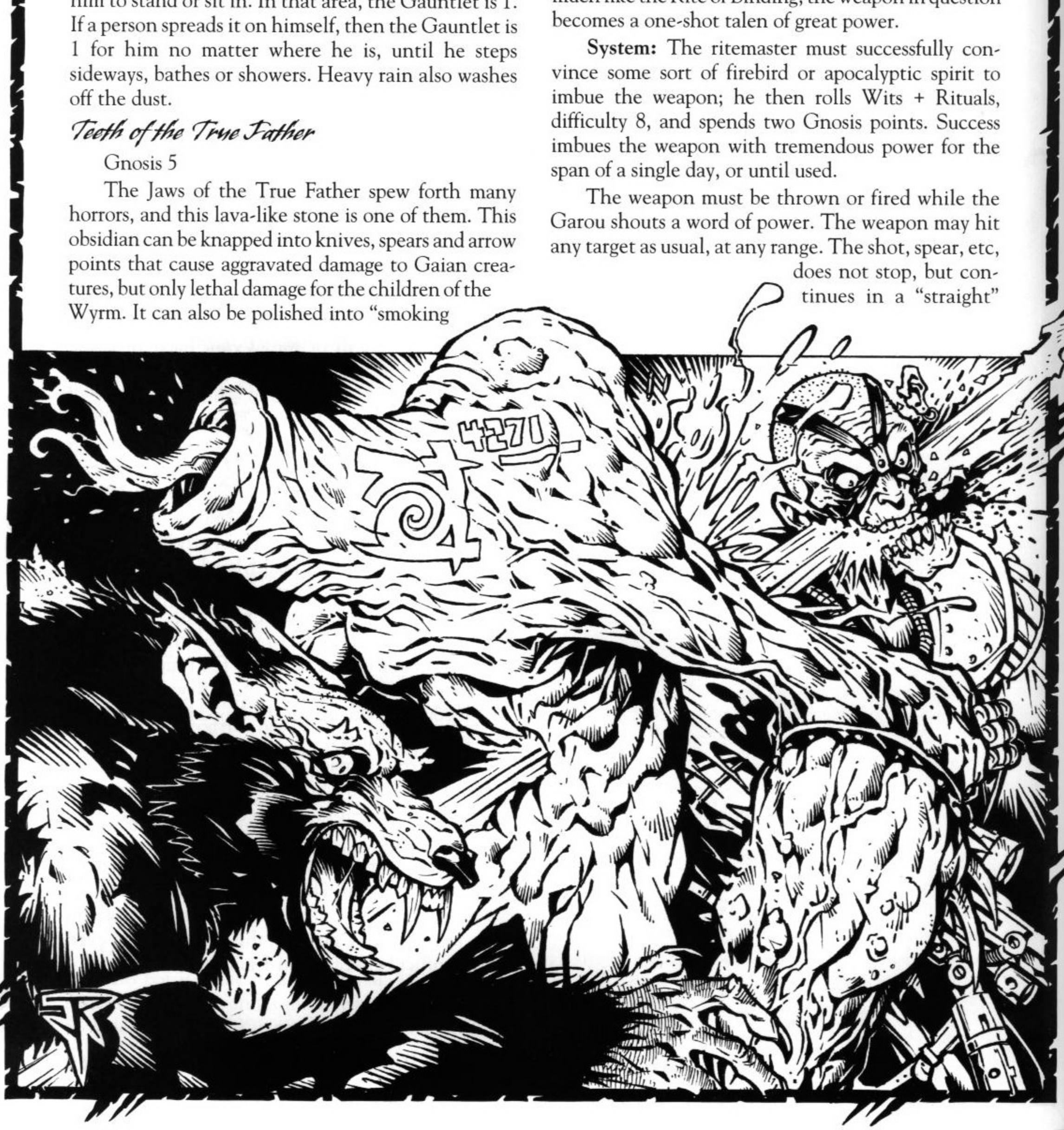
Flaming Death Spears (Mystic)

Level Five

"Heaven gave the spark," a poet said; "to it return the fire." This rite takes any missile weapon and makes it into a weapon of apocalyptic power. In essence, it is much like the Rite of Binding; the weapon in question becomes a one-shot talen of great power.

System: The ritemaster must successfully convince some sort of firebird or apocalyptic spirit to imbue the weapon; he then rolls Wits + Rituals, difficulty 8, and spends two Gnosis points. Success imbues the weapon with tremendous power for the span of a single day, or until used.

The weapon must be thrown or fired while the Garou shouts a word of power. The weapon may hit any target as usual, at any range. The shot, spear, etc, does not stop, but continues in a "straight"



line ad infinitum. For each multiple of its own range (two times, three times, and so on) that it goes, it adds one die of damage to its dice pool. Thus a burst from an assault rifle, with a range of 120 yards, would inflict three additional dice at 350 yards. As the shots go on and on they become more and more powerful. This power does nothing for increasing a weapon's utility at long range (after all, the difficulty to hit is not reduced), but that isn't the aim of the rite. Weapons imbued with this power are meant to be fired into the hordes of the Wyrm, hitting harder the farther into the ranks they penetrate. When fired into the sky these weapons truly seem to be the Death Spears of the prophecy.

Rite of the Flawless Emerald (Accord, Gurahl)

Level Three

This rare rite enables a werebear to heal the land by making its wounds his own. The Gurahl stands on the land and binds it to himself, eating a small piece of earth or bark to make himself one with the land.

System: The ritemaster spends a Gnosis point in addition to the usual Charisma + Rituals roll; the area affected is a radius of 100 yards per success. From that point on, any damage (in the form of fire, toxic waste, corruption and draining of caerns), explosives or the destruction of life) done to the land is healed as the damage is done proportionately to the Gurahl instead. The digging of a grave amounts to little more than a bee-sting, but a forest fire burns the Gurahl severely. The damage is aggravated from magical sources, but ordinary damage such as excavations and fire cause lethal damage. The Gurahl use this rite to heal land and to preserve it for the future. The Gurahl may, if standing on the affected section of land, perform the rite backwards to negate the effects.

Rite of Gaia's Treasure (Mystic)

Level Four

This rite may very well be the last hope of the many species of animals and plants lost in the Apocalypse. The Red Talons are its keepers, and perform it upon themselves as the Last Battle nears.

The Talon eats a piece of some plant or animal and then utters its secret name. Many Talons have the animal's likeness scarred or branded onto the skin of their Glabro form. When the Talon dies, the spirit of the animal or plant uses their dead body to return to life when the time is right: from the corpses of Gaian warriors trees and flowers will bloom in the coming New Time.

System: The ritemaster must spend a Gnosis point in addition to the Wits +Rituals roll.

Rite of the Time Wheel (Mystic, Mokolé)

Level Two

The Mokolé are designed to be living memory, and many of their mystical powers derive from that purpose. This rite is yet another example; it empowers the Mokolé to remember the turning of the stars themselves. Apis, the extinct aurochs-shifters, taught the Mokolé this rite long ago.

The Mokolé — or other shapeshifter who learns this rite — mediates in the center of a celestial diagram drawn in sand, blood or other appropriate materials. As he meditates, he pictures in his mind a huge wheel of stars decorated with the signs of the Planetary Incarnae and the ancient Zodiac. When the rite is completed (in an hour's time), the character is suffused with the knowledge of the ancients regarding all things astronomical, astrological and even meteorological.

System: The ritemaster must make a Rituals + Gnosis roll, difficulty 7 if the sky can be seen, 8 otherwise. The number of successes is the number added to all social and mental dice pools for the rest of the session having anything to do with the sky, space or the Planetary Incarnae.

Legacy

When Mephi had regained solid ground, he found himself surrounded by a sorry lot of bedraggled Crinos werewolves, glaring and pointing weapons at him. The girl in the center of them — who still held the other end of his staff — stepped forward and pressed the edge of an ancient khopesh against his throat.

"Who are you?" she growled, her voice sounding more wary and afraid than intent on immediate violence. "What are you doing here?"

"My name is Mephi Faster-than-Death," Mephi said, trying to sound relaxed and supremely confident despite the circumstances. "And I'm here looking for you."

When that got him no appreciable reaction but a low growl from the leader's throat, he raised a hand palm-out and tried again. "You've got nothing to fear from me, kids. I've come a long way to make sure you're safe."

This set off a general murmuring among the assembled werewolves. With thick, rumbling whispers unsuited to their bulky war forms, they looked back and forth at each other, at Mephi and at their leader in the center. Clearly most of them wanted to take him at his word, and they started sinking down into their Homid and Lupus forms and talking even more excitedly in accents that spanned the globe. Some of them even appeared to recognize him from various secondhand descriptions now that the shock of his arrival was wearing off. Only the leader remained skeptical, and she refused to abandon her Crinos form just yet. Her eyes were wide, her ears stood out, and she kept her mouth open showing fangs. She didn't ease off with the khopesh either.

"Easy now," Mephi said, very aware of the blade's edge nicking his Adam's apple. "You are Bennu, right."

It was less a question than an opportunity, and hearing her name, the girl finally took it. She released Mephi's staff, lowered her weapon and melted down into her Homid form at last. Mephi furtively let out a tense breath, then planted his staff straight up and down on the ground and leaned against it casually.

"I am," Bennu said, taking a self-conscious step back. "And your name's Mephi? How did you get here?"

Mephi looked around at the assemblage first rather than answer. The better question would have been how any of these people got here. There was hardly a Full Moon among them, and no apparent combat veterans of any other auspice either. None of these kids could have been older than him, or even *as* old. Only Bennu came close — she'd have to be about twenty-five if Mephi reckoned correctly — but you wouldn't know it to look at her. She had the drawn-in, tense posture of an incorrigible introvert who's been thrust into a room full of strangers. Everything about her marked her as a sheltered shut-in who didn't want to be where she'd found herself but realized she had no choice.

She was dressed plainly in torn jeans and a deeply stained turtleneck pullover, and if she owned any jewelry, it was gone now. Her long brown hair hung swept back in an unruly ponytail. A V-shaped scar marred the tanned skin of her neck under her chin, and another fine white scar accented her high cheekbone under her right eye. She had trouble with eye contact now that she wasn't threatening him, but it was to her eyes that Mephi was inevitably drawn. They were haunted

and distant, with a blankness that only comes from seeing too much horror and despair in too short a life. It was a look all too familiar to Mephi these days. He saw in it the shadows of all the werewolves he'd been close to who had died before their time. He saw rivals and mere acquaintances and lovers, and he saw close friends, all taken from him by war or treachery or simply cruel fate. He reflexively clutched his cobra-headed walking staff, which his dearest and most painfully departed friend had given him years ago. After a moment, the others around him started murmuring again, breaking the spell.

"Well?"

"Sorry," he said when he realized how long he'd been staring without saying anything. "Didn't mean to gawk, but you remind me of somebody. Somebody special who died not too long ago."

"I know," the young woman said, smiling sadly. "Everyone says that. But you didn't answer my question."

"Right, sorry. How I got here. Well, I followed you. Sort of. I was at the Wheel of Ptah caern in Morocco, and I ran into Damien Mourns-the-Dead. He told me you'd gone missing from the Sept of the Etesian Wind in Tanta. He was worried about you. He asked me to find you."

Bennu nodded, her eyes showing a spark of anger. "Damien, of course. He wouldn't just let us vanish. We're too valuable to him. Him and the rest of those vultures." That assessment earned Bennu a few nods and bitter chuckles from the others.

"Those 'vultures' have been trying to keep you alive and safe since they found out what you can do, kid," Mephi said. "The least you could do—"

"I'm not a kid," Bennu snapped, standing a little straighter. "None of us are kids. Look at where we are. This is Ta-tchesert, not a freaking shopping mall! None of those old men with their scrolls and notebooks and laptops got us here. I did! We found the paths here, and I led the way!"

"And how many did you lose?" Mephi growled back, looking around at the beaten, exhausted spectators, all of whom seemed to be nervously taking their cues from Bennu. "Half the ones who set out with you? More? How many?"

Bennu said nothing, but her silence was very telling.

"And what if you'd been killed or gotten separated from these others? You think any of them could have found their way here, Miss Leader? If something had happened to you, they would have been lost."

"That doesn't matter. We made it—"

"*It does matter!*" Mephi barked, surprising himself. "All of you are legends to our people — you know this. You've got a gift that gives our people hope, and our hope makes the Garou Nation that much stronger. And you'd better believe me when I tell you, we need all the strength we can get for what's coming."

"Don't patronize me," Bennu growled, ignoring Mephi's hinted warning. "You sound just like all the others. I know — *we* know — how special we all are. We understand our destiny better than any of *you* do. You don't hear what we hear. We know better than to think we're just poster-children for this tribe's happy ending. We've got a sacred purpose and a duty to perform! We're going to break Set's curse and flood our ancestors' wisdom and power back across the Gauntlet once and for all. Then you'll really see what strength our tribe provides the Garou Nation."

"You listen to me, girl, Damien told me what you think you're going to accomplish, and I'm here to tell you you're wasting your time. Our elders and mystics have been trying for *millennia*, and none of them has made so much as a dent. All you're doing is sticking your heads in the sand and squandering the gift you've been given to share with your people. You're just a bunch of kids. You don't have the first clue what you're doing!"

Bennu seethed and boiled up into her Glabro form unconsciously, and several of the blessed children started hefting their weapons dangerously once again. Yet before blood could be shed, an older, calmer voice rang out over the snarls and growls.

"Actually, they have much more than that," the voice intoned, stilling the younger Garou and generally cooling tempers all around. "They have me."

The knot of young men and women around Mephi parted to reveal an older man coming toward them. He was almost seven feet tall, spear bald, dressed like an Ancient Egyptian peasant farmer, and so deeply brown that he was almost jet black. His eyes had the hollow distance of an ageless spirit, yet he spoke the flawless High Tongue of a Garou diplomat. The blessed children stared at him in awed reverence, and even Bennu bowed slightly as she stepped aside so the man could stand face to face with Mephi. The man looked Mephi over once, taking in all of his various accoutrements.

"Rest easy, fellow Strider," the man said. "I apologize for your reception. Know that you are welcome here, just as are these others."

"Who are you?" Mephi asked, although he was fairly sure he already knew.

"My name is Wepauwet, the guardian and emissary of Ta-tchesert, our Tribal Homeland."

Mephi nodded and took a deep breath. He'd heard stories about this person from those few Striders who'd found their way here in the past and managed to survive the trip back and tell the tale. This man greeted all comers to Ta-tchesert, showed them around, answered what questions he could, then sent them on their way with a sad reassurance that he would see them again some day. Where he'd come from and how he'd been chosen for this role was something of a mystery, however.

"You see," Bennu said, looking in Mephi's direction but no longer making eye contact. "We're not entirely hopeless here."

"I'll believe it when I see it," Mephi grumbled. Then to Wepauwet he said, "How is it exactly your being here helps these kids? I mean no disrespect, but—"

"Of course," Wepauwet said. "I understand what you want to know, and I'll answer presently. But for now, come away from the water's edge. Join us at camp, and I shall explain why these children's coming here heralds the ultimate end of Set's curse."

• • •

"In the ancient land of Khem, I was a leader and a warrior like my blood brother, Shu Horus. When Set's venom poisoned our tribe's spirit, I sought out the Cult of Isis — they who restored Horus just as Isis restored Osiris — and begged for a way to cheat the curse long enough to find an absolute cure. Hearing my hatred for Set in my voice, the cultists blessed me with their magic, and I became a living god among my kin and kind."

Wepauwet was speaking as Mephi, Bennu and the other blessed children sat with him around a small fire. Their Umbral home realm stretched out silent and desolate all around them, with pyramids, obelisks and wind-carved sand dunes dotting the terrain to the horizon. They had eaten a quick meal of bread, fish and dried fruit, and Mephi was glad for this chance to rest before he made his way back to the physical world to share what Phoenix and Meros had revealed to him in the Aetherial Realm.

"But when I eventually fell in battle, as all warriors must," the old man continued, "Owl came to me and bade me stay here at the threshold between life and death, rather than return for vengeance. Here, he said, I could work with those souls who had come here before and since the curse to find a way to purge Set's poison."

"Really?" Mephi said. "You mean Owl tricked you and you've been stuck here ever since?"

Wepauwet shook his head with a long-suffering look that indicated that he'd answered that sort of question many times. "No. I know that this realm must seem sere and desolate to you, but to me it thrives with the congress of the dead. Our ancestors — yours and mine, predating the Impergium, the Wars of Rage and even those events lost to time — dwell all throughout this desert plain. However, Set's curse is such that you and they would be forever ignorant of each other but for my mediation."

Mephi shivered uncomfortably and looked around at the landscape again. His gaze captured the blessed children around the fire before lighting on Wepauwet once more. Other than those who encircled the fire, he saw no one.

"And what about these here?" he asked.

"We hear them as Wepauwet does," Bennu said. "We all hear what they are saying to each other, but they don't recognize us. They don't even know we're here, except for those who can speak through us."

"But I thought—"

Wepauwet was already shaking his head. "You thought — all of you thought — that the curse somehow didn't apply to these children, but you were wrong. The real reason they can do what none of the rest of you can is the same reason they've come here. I willed it."

"You?" Mephi asked. "You've done this?"

"Yes. Although it nearly destroyed me, I forged the connections that have blessed these children, bonding them to their long-forgotten ancestors once again. It is I who have woven together knowledge given to me by the Cult of Isis, lore remembered only by our ancient elders, and the fruits of my own experimentation these long centuries. I have devised a ritual that can pierce Set's curse and eventually tear it to shreds. I could not cheat that curse, but defeating it is not beyond me."

"So why haven't you just done it?" Mephi asked. "Or is it a one person at a time thing?"

"I cannot perform the greater ritual here, and I cannot return to the physical world myself. That's why I have called out to these children and summoned them here."

"We will be his hands in the physical world," Bennu said. "Wepauwet will teach us the ritual, then we're going back where we came from to do as he shows us. By our efforts combined, we can do as he says. We can break the curse at last."

A thrill passed through Mephi, despite all he'd been through. Could it really happen? Could it be that the time of Set's curse was at an end? It seemed impossible, but then again, Bennu and the others' gift had seemed impossible just a decade ago.

"The very idea," he breathed. "To finally come home. To finally know where we came *from*... It could be just the thing our people need to face what's coming."

"Indeed," Wepauwet said, extremely pleased with himself.

"It's what we were born for," Bennu said. "Our sacred destiny. Now it looks like you're a part of it too. You can be the one who sees us safely home."

"So what are we waiting for?" Mephi asked. "If everybody's rested up, let's get moving."

"We can't go yet," Bennu said. "We only just got here. Just a couple of hours before you splashed down into the river."

"Yes, it is as she says," Wepauwet said. "I have only just begun teaching them the ritual."

"Oh. Well how much time do you need? Time's sort of at a premium here."

"Not long," Wepauwet said.

"Yeah," Bennu added. "He said probably no more than a month or two of study and another couple of weeks of practice, then we'd be ready to return."

Mephi's face fell, and his hopes for his tribe shattered and started raining down in despair. "*Months?* That's too long!"

"This is no simple Prayer for the Prey, Mephi," Wepauwet barked. "These children know nothing of the Ren Hekau of ancient Khem. They have only the most basic understanding of Umbral geometry. Even with their ancestors' help, training them to acquire and prepare the material components of this ritual will take a minimum of two weeks. This cannot be rushed. Our people's fate depends on getting this ritual exactly right!"

"You don't have months," Mephi growled back. "You don't know where I've been or what I've seen just getting here. Every day you waste you're signing a death warrant for more of our people. More people in general. I've seen a vision in the claws of Phoenix..."

At that, Bennu gasped and put a hand over her mouth. Some of the other blessed children — probably Theurges like Bennu — did the same. They'd studied the original Prophecy of the Phoenix, and they knew better than to dismiss a visitation from that same spirit too easily.

"You don't understand," Wepauwet said. "I've been working this ritual out for centuries. I've blessed these children. I've brought them here. All nearly at the cost of my immortal spirit. There's no other way to break the curse. You mustn't get in the way of my work."

"Your work's only going to echo over a broken corpse, spirit," Mephi said. "The Earth is going to die. It might already be dying. If you keep these children here, they're not going to have a home to go back to."

"You're just trying to frighten them," Wepauwet said, rising to his feet to glare down at Mephi. Looking around at the blessed children, he could see that that assessment wasn't too far off. "Why? Why don't you want this? Don't you understand the legacy I'm trying to leave this world?"

"If there were another way," Mephi began, standing up as well, "I would that Khem could be just like it was now and forever more. But that isn't possible. You haven't seen what I've seen, so you don't know what I know. But you will — all of you. Listen close to what I have to tell you, then decide for yourself if you're better off here digging in the sand or fighting to save the world beside your brothers and sisters."

Before Wepauwet could interrupt, Mephi recounted what he'd seen as Phoenix had carried him through the Aetherial Realm. He told them of humans dying and killing each other. He told them of plagues ancient and new-made decimating the survivors. He told them of tidal waves and rivers of molten stone washing away the works of man. He told them of the Weaver's web coming unraveled and tearing the planet's seams asunder. He told them of the Wyrm's hordes scourging the planet in realms both spiritual and physical until their frenzied lord itself was free. He told them of all this and of how the baleful Red Star Anthelios bathed all the carnage and destruction in its lurid fulgor.

As he finished — able now to think back on all he had seen without succumbing to the terror that still roiled within him — he pointed up into the night sky over his Tribal Homeland with his cobra-headed walking staff. The blessed children's gazes followed the line and fastened on what he was pointing at — the Red Star, visible even here in this supposed sanctuary. It was tiny and still faint, but it grew visibly stronger even as they stared in mounting horror.

Even Wepauwet looked ashen and taken aback, but he recovered his wits before anyone but Mephi noticed. "No," he said. "That doesn't prove anything. Don't listen to him, children. He's just trying to scare you."

"He's doing a damn good job," one of the children moaned.

"We still have plenty of time," Wepauwet said, but there was fear in his eyes now. "We can still make this work. We can still break the curse."

"You're out of time," Mephi said, addressing the blessed children directly now. "You don't have months. You might not even have weeks. What I was shown is *going to* happen. It was starting even before I left the Sept of the Etesian Wind."

"But you can do this," Wepauwet said, pleading now as more of the children began ignoring him. "You must! You'll be heroes!"

"They already are heroes," Mephi said. "They're Garou. And right now they have a duty. Not to their tribe; not even to themselves. Gaia's dying, and She needs Her warriors. That's their only duty. You've forgotten that, spirit."

"No!" Wepauwet whined. "Children, you mustn't go! You must not leave me! My legacy—"

"Your legacy's done," Mephi said. "I'm sorry. Do what you can from here, but we've all got to go back where we're needed."

"But what can we do?" Bennu asked. "If what you saw is what's going to happen, what hope in hell could we possibly have?"

"We have what hope we make for ourselves," Mephi said. "And we have the hope hidden in Phoenix's words. Remember once before she said, 'This is as it shall be, but not as it should.'" The children who'd studied the Prophecy of the Phoenix remembered those words very well, and they began to murmur. "If we're brave and true and we use the strength Gaia gave us, we can stop this. Or if not stop it, at least hold back as much of it as we can, and maybe preserve enough of Gaia to keep Her from dying. We might not be able to save the whole world and all of creation, but we can save enough to make a difference. But not from here. Not if we don't go back and fight!"

"You fool," Wepauwet growled. "I won't let you take them. I won't let you ruin everything I've worked so hard to create." As he spoke, his tall frame grew even taller and filled out with dense, ropy muscle. Night black hair covered his body, and red rage welled up in his eyes. He hunched over, flexing his long talons, and gnashing his fangs menacingly. "I'll kill you first."

Mephi boiled up instantly into his own Crinos war form and held his staff at the ready. "Then bring it on. You'll have to kill me to stop me."

"And me," Bennu said, growing more slowly.

"Me too," another of the blessed children said.

Another said the same, and soon all of them were agreeing and growing up into their Crinos forms. As they spoke, Wepauwet glared at each of them in turn, his eyes wide with shocked outrage.

"How dare you?" he roared, falling back a step from the ring of werewolves that now stood opposed to him. "What do you think you're doing?"

"We're going home," Bennu snarled.

"Where our friends need us," another said.

"Where our families need us," a third chimed in.

"Where *Gaia* needs us," Mephi said.

"You'll all die!" Wepauwet cried. "You're insane!"

"So people keep saying," Mephi said. "But they're wrong. We're not hiding, we're not surrendering, and we're not going down without a fight. If you don't like it — tough!" Then, turning away from Wepauwet, he said to the blessed children, "Get your stuff together, everybody. Let's get out of here while there's still time. We've got work to do."

"You'll all die!" Wepauwet shrieked again and again as the fruits of his legacy turned away from him and began to head for the Umbral reflection of the Nile behind them. According to the stories of others who had made it back from this place, the river led to Umbral pathways that would take these travelers to safe realms from which they could return to the physical world. Bennu and a few of the older remaining children began discussing which one to take back, all while trying to ignore the ancient spirit's abuse. Mephi found a safe spot on the river's steep bank and waited as the blessed children climbed down it one by one. When the last had descended and waded out into the Nile, Mephi turned to go at last. Before he could take the first step, though, Wepauwet changed tacks desperately one last time.

"When you die, you'll all end up right back here with me," he said, coming toward Mephi slowly. "Your spirits will come crawling here for rest and some final peace once you've finished your protracted suicide. You'll beg for it. You'll beg *me* for it. But no matter how you beg, I won't let you in! I'll bar the threshold forever, and you'll never touch the sands of Ta-tchesert again!"

"I hope I *don't* have to see this place again for a good long while," Mephi replied. "But when my time does come and I show up back here, you'd better stay out of my way. My father's in there somewhere, and my great-grandfather, and a line of heroes stretching back to before you were born, and if you get in the way of my reunion with them, we're all going to tear your ass into so many pieces not even Owl'll be able to find them all. Now get out of my face. I've got a job to do."

And with that, he turned and leapt into the river to lead his fellow warriors back home where they were sorely missed. As he paddled out in front of all of them and began searching for a current to take them away from this place, he heard a faint sound rising from the blessed children. As they treaded water and made ready to leave, they had begun to sing something that Mephi didn't recognize. The sound of it drowned out Wepauwet's cries and rose in one long, ululating howl that seemed to carry on the wind in all directions. It was an Anthem of War, Mephi realized, though one not heard by the living in eons. It urged the listeners to die well or not at all, and it wished Gaia's warriors victory regardless of what it cost them to win it.

"Sing it louder," Mephi called as the river started to carry him and the children away. "Shout it out so the Wyrm and all his spawn can hear it. It won't be the only one they hear when we get back, and it sure as hell won't be the last!"

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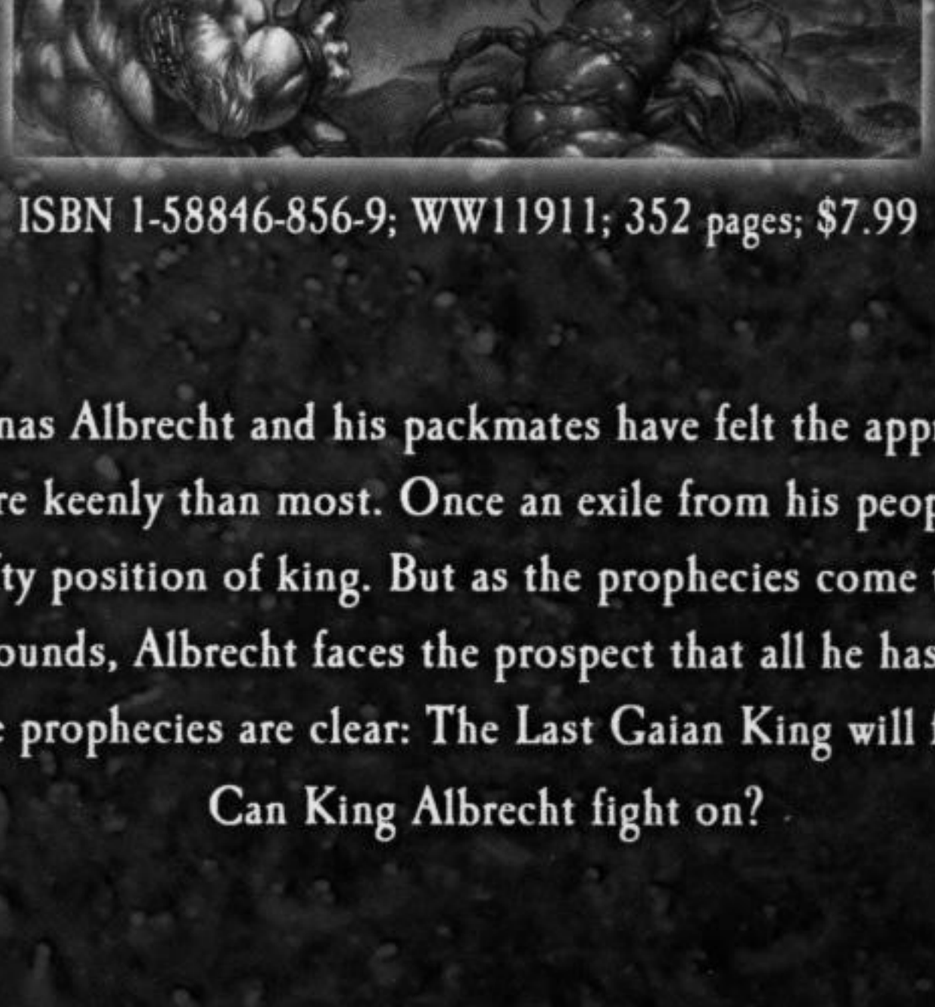

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