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and
james a. moore

PROM QUEEN

Lettering by Leif Jones

art:
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and
alex sheikman







NO, I DON'T THINK IT'S A COLD OR FLU. IN FACT, I THINK IT MIGHT BE PSYCHOLOGICAL.



WELL, SHE SEEMS UPSET ABOUT SOMETHING. I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE PROM.

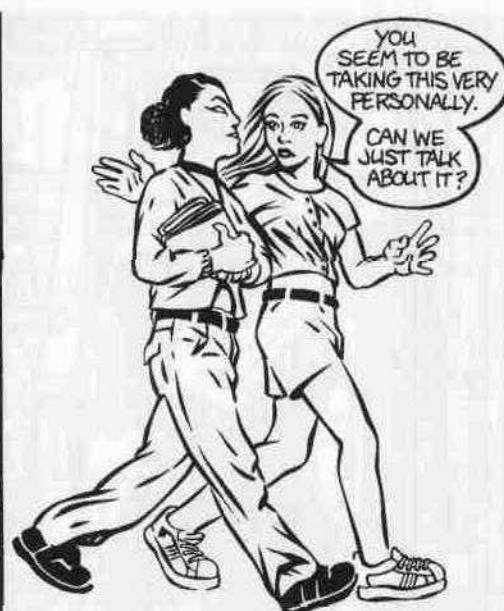
NO, SHE HAS BEEN ASKED. SHE EVEN GOT A CALL EARLIER TODAY, BUT SHE JUST DIDN'T SEEM TO CARE. SHE SAID SHE'D CALL HIM BACK LATER.

I THINK SHE HAD AN ARGUMENT WITH AMANDA. NEITHER OF THEM HAS CALLED THE OTHER IN THE PAST COUPLE OF DAYS, AND THAT NEVER HAPPENS.



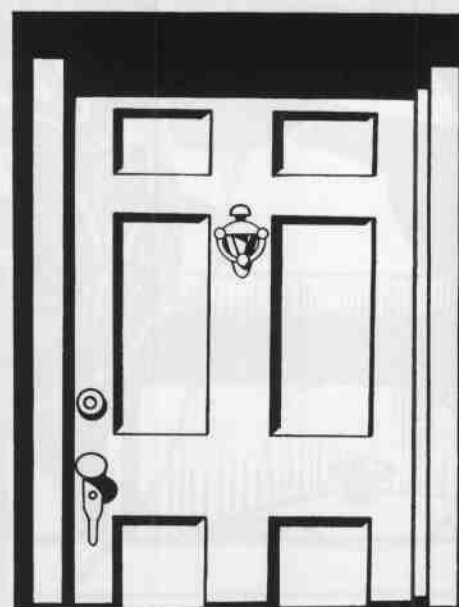
WELL, I THINK SHE MIGHT BE GOING THROUGH SOME KIND OF CHANGE.



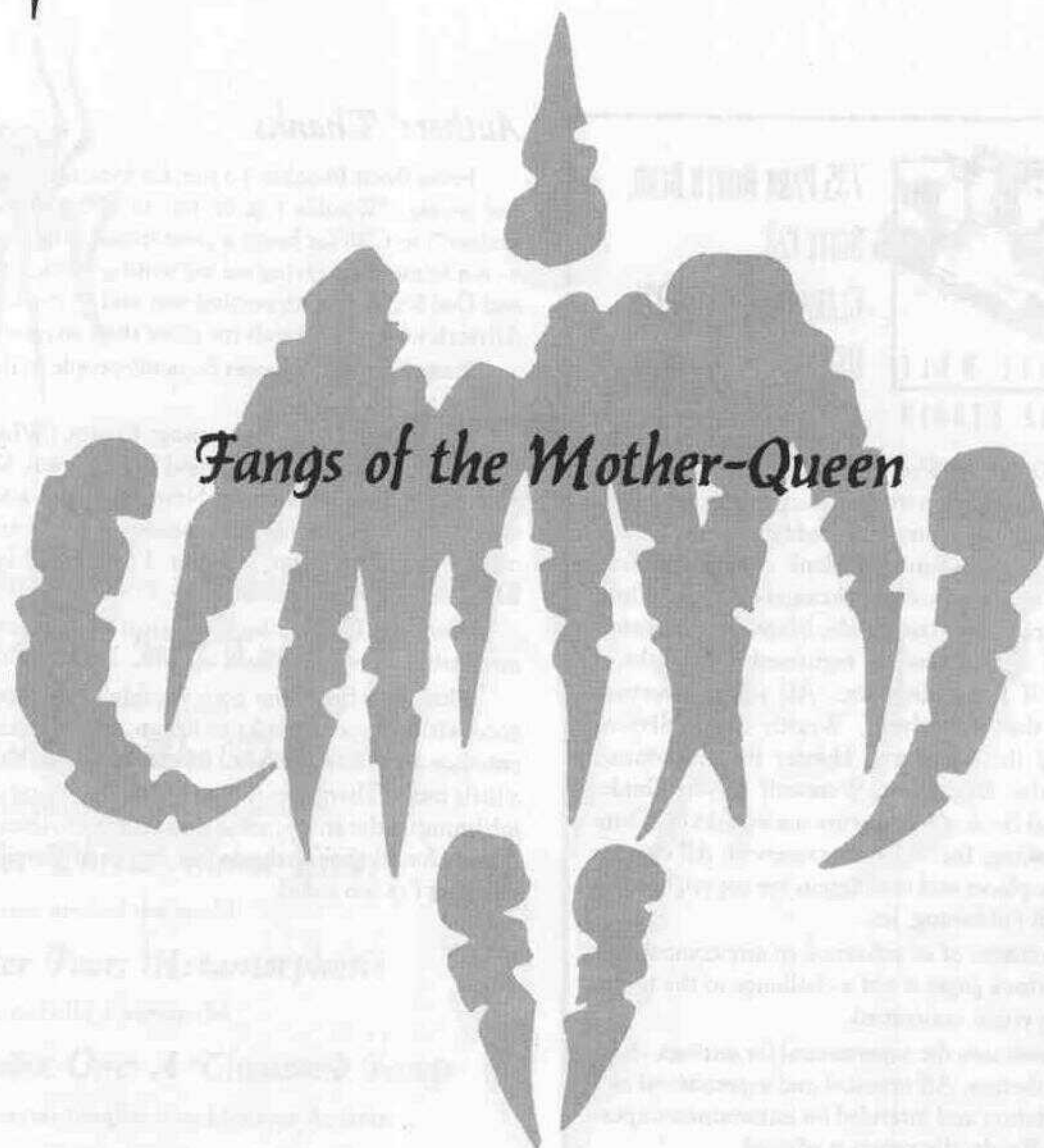








ANANASI™



Fangs of the Mother-Queen

By Brett Brooks and James A. Moore

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Conrad "Whipwreck" Hubbard, for bravely stepping into the land of beaks and feet.

Rebecca "Hitmonchan" Schaefer, for insisting on making it to the stadium on opening day.

Phillipe "Mr. Popularity" Boule, for discovering that you get a lot more visitors with a dog in your cubicle.

Authors' Thanks

From Brett Brooks: To Jim, for looking at me one day and saying, "Wouldn't it be fun to write a book about spiders?"; to Cliff for being a great friend with great advice — not to mention giving me my writing break; to my Mom and Dad for always supporting me; and to my loving wife Allyson, who understands me more than anyone should.

From James A. Moore: So many people to thank, and so little space....

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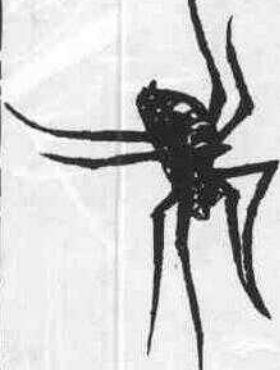
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Introduction: In a Madly Sacred Place

They'd traveled a great distance in some cases, half a world or more as often as not. The trip was sometimes easy, often difficult and extremely necessary. They'd managed long enough on their own, second-guessing what they'd become, trying as best they could to learn about why they were and what made them so different from their peers in both spider and human society. Now at last they would have their answers, or they would know why.

The procession moved nimbly over the great strands of calcified webbing, following their silent guides and gazing with curiosity at their surroundings. In every case, this was

their first time away from the earth and into the realm of spirits. The great frozen strand of web spanned on for eternity, reaching to the horizon and beyond, ever branching and expanding. From time to time they saw strange things moving in the distance, and once a spider-thing that stood almost 20 feet in height moved past them at a speed that was simply not possible in the physical realms. The creature took notice of them and moved slightly in their direction, but turned away again when it recognized them as brethren. That was just as well; they hadn't wanted to kill it.



Three of their guides extended hands that were long and supple and began moving their fingers, whispering into the breeze as they did so. Tendrils of energy came from their fingers, webs that wove together and tore at the very fabric of reality. In a few minutes, the webs formed a tunnel, and two of the three walked into the tunnel, guiding their charges down the proper path. Towards the back of the group a fourth guide grabbed a straggler by the neck, pulling him away from the others. "You're not supposed to be here, my friend." He hissed. "You weren't invited." The darkly tanned Native American struggled, gasping in protest. His captor's body changed, growing larger and more powerful as he held his captive in place. The straggler struggled, desperate to escape, but found that a thick, sticky substance kept him locked to the powerful arm that held him.

"You were not invited," hissed his captor past mandibles that glistened with the threat of poison. "Only the Ananasi may enter this place."

The captive struggled, forcing his own change, revealing himself as one of the Nuwisha. Despite the situation, he laughed. "It was only a joke, brother spider. A jest among cousins."

A second guide stepped forward, already in the form that blended spider and human. She was larger than the male beside her, and he deferred to her. "We do not share your humor, brother coyote. I see by the markings on your face that you follow Ti Malice, but you are still not welcome here."

The Nuwisha smiled again, hiding his fear behind the grin. "Well then, I'll be on my way. I have learned my lesson." He pulled himself from the iron grip, fighting the urge to yelp out his pain as he lost a claw-sized portion of his pelt to the powerful glue that had captured his human form.

He walked slowly, carefully away from the Ananasi behind him, feeling his heart thudding mercilessly in his temples. After seven paces, the first webs snapped around his neck. Other strands of the silky stuff that pulled his arms mercilessly back and bound his legs quickly followed the first. The pain was excruciating, but he struggled just the same, trying to shift his forms in an effort to escape. Each transformation brought only more of the webs, until he was completely entangled in the nightmarish stuff.

"Oh, Coyote," he prayed. "Help your foolish child on this day."

"Ti Malice cannot hear you. You are not in her domain." The voice of the female was detached, unemotional. She spoke to the other monsters around her, using her massive arms and legs to strike the web beneath her and chattering in a series of clicks that meant nothing at all to him.

Three of the werespiders swarmed over the Nuwisha and a moment later the coyote was hoisted onto the

shoulders of two of the worst nightmares he'd ever seen, and taken with the others down the long web tunnel that held the fabric of space at bay. Moments after they'd left the strand, the tunnel's entrance closed, leaving all as it had been before they passed.

Some time later, the entire gathering entered the place they had come to visit, the sacred home of Ananasa, their Queen, their god. The Nuwisha saw everything, heard their voices, their tales, and the truth of why the Ananasi existed. Long before the tales were finished, his mind had fragmented. During the long, dark time when the newly arrived Ananasi were learning everything they would need to know about the new world they'd entered, the werecoyote's laughter echoed through the great chambers and caves of crystal.

For eight days and nights — as time passed within the great sacred caves — the newly changed Ananasi were taught about their bodies, how to control the changes that took place, what to avoid and how to survive in a hostile world. Those who did the best were allowed the privilege of feeding on their uninvited guest, never enough to kill, but enough to appreciate the rare flavor of shapeshifter blood.

Then on the ninth day, the real education began. Sitting before the long empty throne of Queen Ananasa, The young ones waited patiently while their elders gathered the proper ingredients for their ritual and began the chant and dance that would summon the First Teacher. Finally, when even the most patient of them was beginning to contemplate the consequences of leaving without permission, three of their elders fell to the ground, convulsing as their bodies broke apart, spilling crawlerlings everywhere. The young ones watched every detail as the three groups of spiders gathered together and began a frantic dance, climbing across and on top of each other, building a new form that was fascinating in its complexity. Then the thousands of spiders held their place and changed, merging into one being.

Though they were almost without fear, they were afraid. Though little could impress them, they were in awe. The creature that stood before them was unique. Power emanated from its body in palpable waves, and a strange, lethal beauty was theirs to observe; something the likes of which had not been seen on Gaia's back in eons. The eyes that looked on them were cold and magnificent, eight eyes in a circular pattern, that glistened with a dark light, a sentience unlike any they'd ever encounter before. The monster moved, and the lights that glistened from the walls of crystal were reflected off its carapace in a multitude of colors.

When the creature spoke, the very fabric of reality shook. The voice that spoke to them was threefold: it was the voices of their teachers, but it was something more as



well. There was menace in that voice, and a sensuality that stirred them all against their conscious will.

It said:

"I am Ananasa, your queen and creator. I could not let you enter this world without meeting each of you at least once, for you are my children, and I love you. But I cannot hold my place here for long. I must speak to you, make you understand where you come from. After that, you will have your teachers back. Listen carefully to their words, for here they speak with my tongue."

The gathering of spiders sighed, enchanted with their queen and already willing to do anything she demanded of them. Had there ever been so perfect, so terrifyingly beautiful a creature before? Surely not.

Ananasa smiled upon her children, and all was silent save for the screams of the lone interloper who'd dared too much and failed. "Listen to me, my children, and I will tell you the truth of your world, this place and the universe. But listen carefully," she cautioned, "for after this day we will likely never meet again."

Queen Ananasa spoke, and the Ananasi listened...

Lexicon

Agere: Myrmidon faction of the Hatar aspect.

Amari Aliquid: Viskr faction of the Kumoti aspect.

Anansi: The first of the Ananasi and the wisest by far. He is, according to some, still alive and kicking.

Anomia: Viskr faction of the Hatar aspect.

Aspect: The member of the Triat that the Ananasi emulate, whether Weaver (Tenere), Wyrms (Hatar) or Wyld (Kumoti).

Atahsaia (Aht-tah-SEI-ah): The Hidden. The secret weapon of Queen Ananasa.

Cabal: The proper title for each faction of the Ananasi. There are nine total cabals, three under the Tenere, three under the Hatar and three under the Kumoti.

Chymos (KI-mos): Wyrms faction of the Kumoti aspect.

Damhàn (DOM-hahn): The proper name for the Ananasi.

Estotilandia: A secluded territory in Africa, the mythic homeland of the Ananasi.

Faction: The given role that each of the Ananasi follows, which, when placed in conjunction with the aspect reveals their place within the Triumvirate. The factions include: Myrmidon (Warrior), Viskr (Wizard), and Wyrms (Questioner of the Way).

First War, the: The great battles between the Ananasi and the Insect Races that led to the complete and utter annihilation of the Insect Races.

Gaderin (Gad-ER-in): Wyrms faction of the Tenere aspect.

Grandmother Spider: The Weaver, one part of the Triat and one-time ruler over the Ananasi.

Great Mother, the: Queen Ananasa.

Great Web, the: The universe as a whole. It is no longer perfect, and that imperfection is what the Ananasi seek to repair.

Hatar: Wyrms aspect of the Ananasi.

Insect Races: The races of "shapechangers" created by the Weaver who originally threatened the Symmetry were destroyed by the Anansi long before most of the Changing Breeds known to exist today had come into existence.

Kar: The Myrmidon faction of the Kumoti aspect.

Kumo: The corrupt werespiders of Asia.

Kumoti: The Wyld aspect of the Ananasi.

Malum (MAL-um): Wyrms faction of the Hatar aspect.

Mother-Queen: Ananasa.

Myrmidon (MEER-mi-don): The Warrior faction of each aspect of the Triumvirate.

Ovid (OH-vid): The other Changing Breeds, most of whom are really not considered significant in the grander scheme of things.

Plicare (PLI-car): Myrmidon faction of the Tenere aspect.

Padrone: Cannibalistic hunters, once part of the Ananasi, who feed on other Ananasi.

Queen Ananasa: The creator of the Ananasi and the guiding force behind everything they do. Spirit parent and totem.

Secean (ses-IAN): The Myrmidon faction of the Tenere aspect.

Sylie (SI-lee): The haven and connection to the Umbra and Queen Ananasa that each Ananasi creates; something like a Den-Realm.

Symmetry: The ultimate goal of the Ananasi and Queen Ananasa: the restoration of the Triat to their proper places and eventual restoration of universal balance.

Tapestry, the: Proper perspective on the universe. According to Ananasi thought, the universe is made of endless strands; only by observing the whole of this grand Tapestry can any creature understand its proper place in the Universe.

Tenere (TEN-er): The Weaver aspect of the Ananasi.

Triumvirate: The political body and duties followed by the Ananasi, as dictated to them by Queen Ananasa.

Unweaving: Deliberate alteration or destruction of a part of the Tapestry/Web, in order to restore Symmetry.





Viskr (VIS-kr): The "wizard" aspect of each faction of the Triumvirate. Their duty is to repair the damage that has been done to the Great Web.

War in the Heavens: The great battles that lead to the fall of the Triat and the building of the Webs.

Weaving: Deliberate alteration, restoration or creation of a part of the Tapestry or Great Web in order to restore Symmetry.

Web, the: The barrier placed between the physical and spiritual worlds by the Weaver; the Gauntlet. While this is a hindrance to most of the Ovid, the Ananasi use the Web to serve their own purposes.

Web of Ananasi: The connection and political body of the Ananasi as a whole. The entire race of Ananasi as relates to the great scheme of the Mother-Queen.

Wyrsta (WEER-stah): The "questioning" faction of the Ananasi. Their duty is to follow the aspect of Weaver, Wyld or Wyrn that they must, but to do so while trying to understand what, exactly the goal of each member of the Triat truly is.

Recommended Reading

Caitlin Kiernan's novel *Silk* is an excellent example of the strange ways in which a werespider goes through the First Metamorphosis. A pleasant and unexpected surprise and an excellent read.

Recommended Websites

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~ednieuw/Spiders/Info/spindraad.htm> is an excellent site, with examples of literally hundreds of different spiders from Australia, Europe and the US. Great care and devotion went into the creation of this site.

<http://www.powerup.com.au/~glen/spider8.htm> is actually a site in Australia, set up by fifth grade students. There is a good amount of general knowledge and a even a few surprises, like images showing the effects of necrotic poisons on human flesh.

Recommended Viewing

The National Audobon Society's Guide to North American Insects and Spiders is an excellent source for locating what sort of arachnids live in what parts of the US.

National Geographic's Wildlife Series of documentaries released a video on spiders. The video is rather difficult to come by these days, but is highly recommended for the attention to detail and as a wonderful method of gaining an overview about spiders and their methods for feeding and surviving.

The Curse of the Black Widow is a surprisingly good movie about being an Ananasi. Though there are obvious differences, the movie also gives a wonderful example of the sheer scale of a werespider.



Kingdom of the Spiders, starring William Shatner, is a campy romp through the wonderful world of too many tarantulas. Highly recommended.

Arachnophobia is, of course, seminal viewing for the proper atmosphere to use when playing an Ananasi. Even if

you don't suffer from the condition, you just might by the time the movie is over.

Tarantula was one of the original big bug disaster movies. It's a lot of fun, despite bad special effects and virtually no plot.





Chapter One: First Threads

Such power and dignity, unhampered by sentiment....If I may put forward a slice of personal philosophy, I feel that man has ruled this world as a stumbling, demented child-king long enough! And as his empire crumbles, my precious black widow shall rise as his most fitting successor!

— Vincent Price, "The Black Widow" prologue, Alice Cooper's *Welcome to my Nightmare*

When the Webs Were Not Yet Spun

I believe the Wyrms were first. There was nothing, no light, no darkness, nothing. That nothing was the Wyrms, the Uncreator. It slept, sated from having destroyed everything that had been before, if there was indeed a before. While the Uncreator slept, the Wyld came into being, an explosion of great fire and chaotic birth that filled the void and disrupted the silence of the universe. The Wyld was everything the Wyrms were not; it was Creation, chaos without focus or purpose, and they hated each other from the first moment. The Creator created, and the Uncreator destroyed, *unable to tolerate the noise and light, the cacophony of endless variables and changes.*

They would have fought forever, had it not been for the Weaver. Wyld claims it gave birth to the Weaver, for nothing could exist without its powers to create. Wyrms say it created the Weaver to reign in the endless changes of Wyld. Weaver says it was born to create balance between the two. Perhaps Weaver was created by the constant fluctuations of Creation

and Uncreation, given sentience because it needed to stop the newly forming universe from destroying itself and rebuilding itself endlessly. Whatever the case, from the chaos and silence that struggled for domination, Order was born. There was symmetry at last, a balance between existence and oblivion. *The universe's birth was complete.*

Wyld continued to create, and Wyrms continued to destroy, but Weaver put perspective on both of these tasks. What Wyld created took form, and was given time to exist before Weaver would allow Wyrms to devour the creations. Wyrms accepted this change, understanding that the constant fighting with its counterpart was useless. Though Wyrms remained hungry as it had ever been, it agreed to eat less, to bide its time between meals. As reward for patience, Weaver gave each thing in the universe a different shape and texture. The Wyrms chose to eat some things quickly, because it liked the flavor of these things and could barely restrain its need to enjoy the tastes. Wyld agreed to this as well, because it liked



to have its creations around for a time, even if they were restricted to certain times and places and shapes.

And so it went: Wyld created, Weaver shaped, and Wyrn devoured in an endless cycle. In time the cycle became almost too regular for the Wyld, however, and it began a new way of approaching the changes. It created Life. It gave minds to the entities it created, and the Weaver, seeing this new addition as a challenge, began to give form to the Life as well.

Weaver had no idea what problems would come from the decision. At first life was simply there, minute entities so far removed from the Triat that it might as well not have existed. Wyrn followed the rules just the same, consuming the lives as each fragment of existence came to the end of its allotted time. When Weaver began to expand on the life created by Wyld, it wanted the beings to exist as singular entities, one of a kind creations that would live, die and be forgotten. Wyld wanted nothing of the sort. Wyld touched the life again, after Weaver had already given it form, and gave of itself a second time, allowing change in the forms Weaver had created. There, my children, is where the troubles truly began.

"Why have you changed what I already formed?" Weaver asked of Wyld.

Wyld replied simply, "I did not like the forms you made, so I gave them the ability to change, to alter themselves to better suit their needs."

"I have allowed you to make life," Wyrn stated dryly, "but I never agreed to this."

Wyld snarled in response, angered by the presumption that it should have to ask permission.

Once again Wyrn and Wyld argued, and while many of the forms created by Wyld survived, many others were destroyed by Wyrn's response to the anger. "If you can make them without permission," he hissed, "I can destroy them in the same way."

Again the two fought, and their rage was enough to shake the very universe. While they struggled, Weaver touched the things with life again, reweaving their patterns, altering them as it saw fit. When it was done with this task, it looked to its siblings and smiled. "There is no reason to fight," said Weaver. "I have changed them again, so that they can be perfect. They will age and die, but before they do, they will have a chance to make more of their own, thus allowing them to continue in a different form. This way everyone is happy."

Wyrn and Wyld considered this for a time, and watched as the life on Gaia grew and slowly changed. Evolution took place and life became more than it was at first. The plants came into existence, and the creatures took shape. Amphibians began to evolve from the primordial life, and with them came the insects.

Weaver was pleased: nothing ever truly went to waste. One life form would eat another to survive and then excrete the wastes from its bowels, which would help yet another to grow and prosper. The life cycle was as it should be. Wyrn was content, because everything eventually died, allowing

less of the chaos and noise of the Wyld to distract Wyrn, and sating the endless hunger of the Uncreator. Wyld was only slightly mollified, however, wanting greater changes and more radical transformations. Unwilling to upset the balance again, however, Wyld turned to a different form of creation. Wyld created the spirits. Wyld gave everything a spirit, even the worlds themselves, but the only one of significance in this tale is the spirit of Gaia.

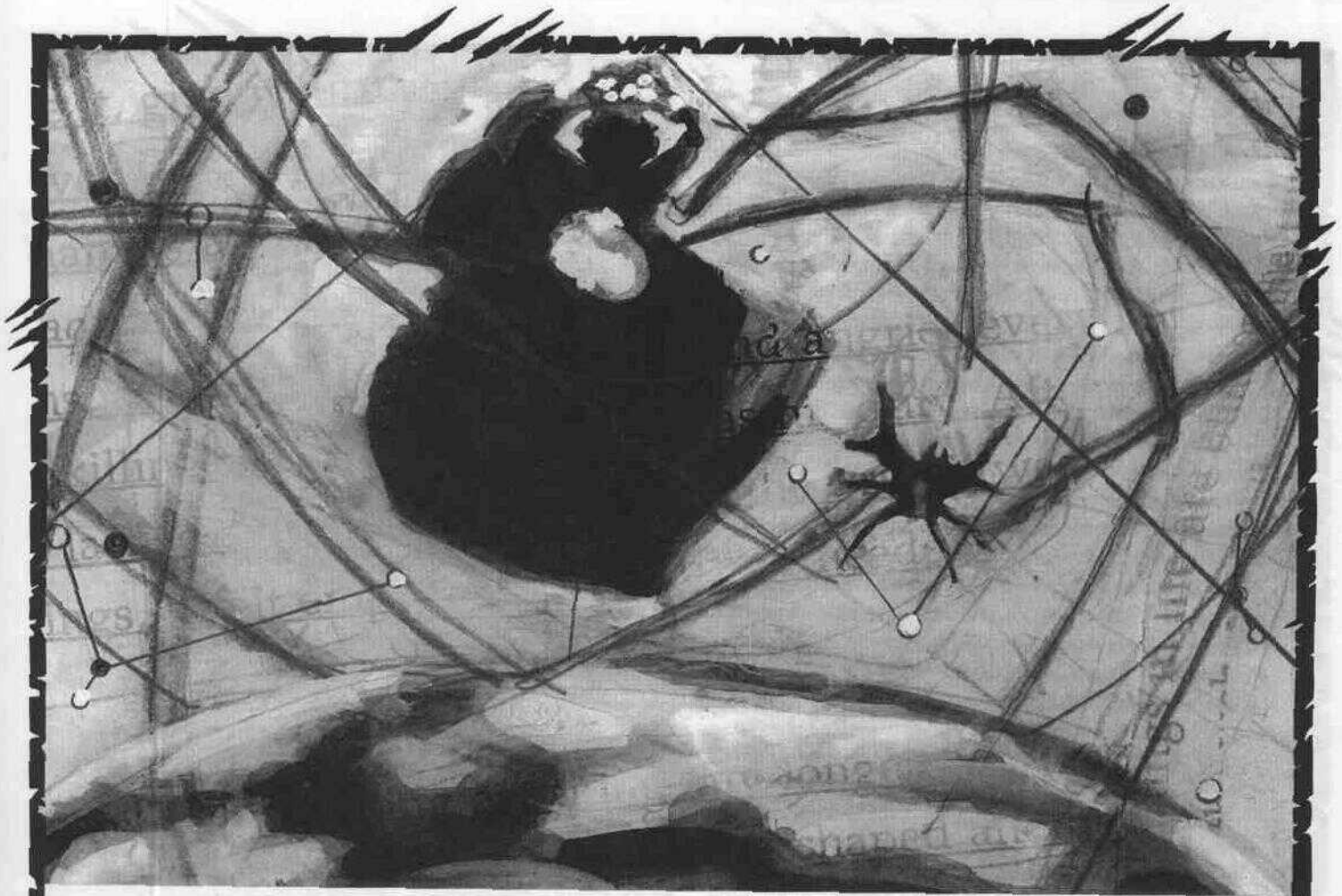
Gaia was the first of Wyld's children. She was bright and beautiful and vibrant. Just as with her creator, Gaia wanted things to change constantly, but she allowed Weaver to touch her, to give her form and function, and allowed Wyrn the same privilege. All things would die eventually, even Gaia herself. But Gaia was a powerful spirit, and her death would not come for a very long time.

One day Weaver grew a bit jealous of Wyld. Weaver realized that it could not create life, but could only define it, give it form and function. Wyld carelessly gave life to all things, and Weaver was constantly redefining the shape of the living things, making minor changes and improving upon the designs of the originals. Wyld would come back and touch the living creatures again, making more radical alterations, and Weaver grew angrier and angrier every time. Wyrn, for his part, kept killing the living things, as was his duty. After a time, Weaver decided that it lacked symmetry. As a part of the Triat it was complete, but without its siblings, it felt empty, lonely. Weaver needed companionship.

Finally, unable to tolerate not actually creating anything any longer, Weaver came up with an idea. Weaver took from its own energy and shaped another. Weaver formed the part of itself it had removed, shaping it until it was satisfied with the results. Then Weaver set that part free to grow and change and prosper. Weaver looked upon its creation and smiled, happy to have an ally to assist with the burdens of forming the universe. "I will call you Ananasi," she said. "You will be second only to me, and you will help me in my duties." Thus I was born into the universe.

If my beliefs and the Weaver's were as one at first, that was something that changed in time. Initially I helped create order from chaos, as was my duty. My weaving skills were powerful, and I found that many of the tasks I had were far too simple. So I made changes on my own. I altered the ways in which certain creatures thought, making them more diverse, less like their brethren. I did this not to disobey the Weaver, but because the world needed more than it had to thrive and prosper. Where once there had only been the flying insect, I broke the pattern of the hive and allowed diversity. Soon there were bees, wasps, hornets and the like. I recreated them, and the Wyld in turn gave them spirits. Wyld soon took a liking to my ways, and we became friends. Before long, Wyld had a great deal of influence over what I was creating, we worked together to make the diversity that you see in the world today.

But Weaver was not amused. Weaver grew angry, raging about my desire to make new things, and change the ones that were already there. "Gaia is not static," I said.



"Gaia goes through constant changes. Without the ability to change, to adapt to their environs, the creatures you give form will die too soon. Wyrms will kill them even faster."

"Why then must Wyrms destroy my creations?" asked Weaver. "They are perfect as they are, and need no changes. Nor should they ever fade and die."

"Ah," I said, at last understanding what was bothering Weaver. "But you created them to die. You made them with deliberate frailties, thus allowing Wyrms to eat his fill and Wyld to continue creating. That is our purpose, is it not, Great Weaver? To make symmetry of chaos, balance from imbalance?"

"My purpose is to give order, yes, but order alone is not enough. There must be structure, continuity and endless perfection." Weaver folded her many legs, content that she had ended the argument.

I was not so easily finished, however. "Endless perfection is not possible in a universe where change is still a reality," I said. "The lack of change would mean that Wyld no longer functioned. Wyld is a necessity."

"I tell you what is necessary, Ananasa; you do not dictate the ways of the Triat to me." Weaver's voice was a hiss of frustration. What Weaver formed should not fall apart — in Weaver's mind. Weaver wanted perfection, and that could never exist in a universe of change, but Weaver could not understand this, *would* not understand because the notion was not appealing.

Without another word, Weaver set out to capture Wyld, feeling that Wyld *could not* change the perfection Weaver desired if Wyld was bound. I called out warning to Wyld, but Wyld only laughed. "Weaver cannot hold me, little sister. I am chaos, and I have no form."

Wyld was right. Weaver tried again and again, but Wyld slipped away from the webs Weaver spun, as surely as water moves between stones in a riverbed. Wyrms heard the battle and moved over to watch, curious as to why Weaver would try to capture Wyld. Once again the battles were mighty. Weaver cast the webs of order and Wyld danced chaotically from between the strands. The energies released would have caused harm on their own, so I captured those energies and began to weave them.

Wyrms moved closer, drawn by what I was doing. You see, Wyrms too had a special place in the universe, and while powerful, was unable to create. "What are you making, little sister?" Wyrms asked of me.

"I am making a new life," I replied. "A life that is both Weaver and Wyld from the very beginning. Something that has never been made before."

Wyrms sighed, sullen and wounded. "Why can I never create such things? Why must I only devour them?"

Seeing Wyrms's grief, I came up with an idea. "Perhaps you can help me make this one, then? It is already Weaver and Wyld, perhaps by adding Wyrms, we can make the perfect creature."

Wyrn grew excited, and though he was not used to the notion of creating, he gave of himself, helping me finish with my new creation. When I was finished, I held the prize for all the Triat to see, and even Weaver and Wyld, caught as they were in their struggles, stopped fighting to examine the new life. "Look at what I have made," I said. "Look upon the first child of Weaver, Wyld and Wyrn."

Like proud, doting parents, the Triat looked upon the spider in my hands and smiled. Before any could respond, the spider did the unthinkable — it created its own spirit. We were all surprised, but very happy. Spider was a perfect creation of the forces of the Triat in harmony. It could hunt and kill, was designed as a predator, but it could adapt of its own accord to live in almost any environment on Gaia. And it could create. It thrived in places where Wyld was strong, thriving even in the face of chaos. Yet it worked with the meticulous patience of Weaver, constantly striving of its own accord to reach for perfection. Spider was patient, calculating and independent; it did not need to be with its own kind to be strong. Spider was also a killer, fast, efficient and ruthless. Spider was the best of all philosophies, and beautiful in its symmetry.

Then there was a great debate between the Triat. What should be done with Spider? It was almost too perfect. If left to its own accord, it would kill everything on Gaia, and even Wyrn did not want that. Wyrn was always hungry, but had learned patience and liked the variety of flavors Life provided. After many days of debate the decision was made: "We will make Spider small," Weaver declared. "Spider will rule over the insects and other small things, keeping them from growing too far and controlling their numbers. For we all know that the insects are capable of great destruction when they are too hungry and too many." Wyld and Wyrn agreed, and it was done. Spider was set upon Gaia's back, and quickly spread across her, devouring the insects that bred too quickly.

For a time all was well. Then Weaver chafed again, frustrated by the changes that continued in what it shaped. By this time there were many creatures on the earth, great fish that swam beneath the oceans and great lizards that roamed the earth. Even in this time the insects were everywhere. Weaver complained once more, but did nothing to mend the problems.

For my part, I debated the meaning of the universe with all the members of the Triat. I wanted to understand the symmetry between them and make certain that it would last. Even then I feared the balance would be lost.

Wyld saw the spirits of the animals and contemplated them. He'd made them for a purpose, but wasn't sure how best to use them. He spoke to Gaia about the problem and together they arrived at a solution. They decided the best way to use those spirits was to have them aid him in protecting his creations. In the earliest times, he took the spirit of the Lizard and placed it within the bodies of the lizards that walked across Gaia. "You shall be Gaia's memory. You will remember everything that transpires, and you will remind both me and Gaia when we risk folly." The Mokolé agreed.

Next he turned to the waters and placed the spirit of Shark within certain of the sharks in the depths. "You shall persevere. No matter what the task or trial, you will survive, for that is the way of the Wyld." The Rokea agreed.

Weaver looked upon these creations and again felt envy. "If Wyld can do this, what is to stop me?" She asked the question aloud, but did not expect an answer.

I answered her anyway. "There is nothing to stop you, Great Weaver. Are not the insects yours to rule over? Did you not give them structure and order far beyond what most would comprehend?"

Weaver smiled. "That is so. I will make my own guardians for Gaia." Weaver turned to the spirits and caught them in her many arms. Where Wyld made but two, Weaver made many. The Bees were given over to the bees on Gaia, and the Moths were given to the moths. So too, the Hornets and the Locusts, the Ants and the Termites. "You will make Order from Chaos. You will build great structures in MY name, and you will thrive in multitudes." They all agreed, save for the moths, and Weaver immediately crushed the spirits that were held within the earthly moths, destroying them before they could do anything.

For a moment the universe itself grew quiet. Weaver had done the unthinkable. Weaver had destroyed. Wyrn was overjoyed by the action, thrilled to think at last that someone understood his feelings and desires. Wyld was outraged.

"You would destroy? You who are only to make structure and balance would destroy? Have you gone mad?" Wyld lashed out, striking Weaver and starting the first of the great changes. These changes came upon Gaia, great changes that have lead to the creation of many of the creatures on her back today. Luna awoke then, and in her time she too had life upon her back, but Weaver took the time in the rampaging battle to make Luna into an example of perfection. All that was on her died, trapped in the perfect silence of absolute order. Luna still lives as a spirit, but the life that once dwelled upon her is long gone.

Still, the sacrifice stopped the war again, ceased the squabbles between the siblings for a time — long enough for me to make my point known to the Triat.

I took the spirit of Spider unto myself, and we had children. The egg sac was large, but the children who hatched from it were small. I gathered the children together in my arms and carefully, meticulously, placed them in the bodies of spiders on Gaia's back. While the war raged in the heavens, I whispered softly to my children. "You will do as I say, always, for I am your mother and I love you." The Ananasi agreed.

And thus were your kind born into this world.

I am a child of Weaver, her sister and her daughter both, a part of her removed from the whole to aid in her tasks and to help make order from chaos. But I am not Weaver. I have never been Weaver. Weaver is unique, as I am unique. I have a different perspective on the universe. That finally became clear when Weaver did the unthinkable a second time.

Wyrn was stricken by Weaver's beauty. He always had been. But seeing Weaver destroy was something new, and





something that excited Wyrn. He wanted to teach her how to destroy and when to destroy. He wanted to help her taste the sweetness of Oblivion.

Weaver had no desire for such things, but she wanted revenge. Wyld had spurned her one time too many, and had struck her for her actions. Wyld constantly changed what Weaver shaped, and allowed Wyrn to destroy what she, herself, saw as perfection. So Weaver came up with a plan.

Knowing of Wyrn's desires, Weaver said that she wanted to learn from him, to be more like him. The notion appealed to Wyrn, and he came to her, eager to consummate their new relationship. He reached out to embrace Weaver, and instead found himself tangled in the webs she spun.

Wyrn screamed, enraged by the betrayal, but no matter how hard he struggled he could not break free from the webs. Wyld tried to help, but was almost captured himself, as Weaver had learned new ways of spinning her webs. Unable to help, he could only watch as Weaver dragged Wyrn into her lair.

Wyld looked to me, confused and hurt, and asked what he should do. I answered him in the only way I could. I said, "You must protect what you have made. Weaver will see everything locked in place, immobile and unchangeable. That will never do."

We looked down upon Gaia and saw that my prediction was already coming to pass. The Insects were growing in numbers, overwhelming the life that was on Gaia's back, and would soon destroy everything.

I turned to my children and asked that they stop the Insects... but that is a tale for after I have left. I am tired now. I must return to my place of rest. Listen well to your elders, know that I love you and always will. I ask much of you, my children, but what I ask is for the good of all. What I ask must be done if Gaia is to be saved.

The War for Gaia

The gathered children sighed, watching as the avatar's host bodies broke apart once more. The Ananasi's god left them, returning to her home. Their uninvited guest, the Nuwisha, gazed blankly at the teeming heap of spiders and drooled. It was obvious to all the others that he'd fled into his own mind seeking solace.

Three separate mounds of spiders pulled slowly, tiredly away from each other, piling again into humanoid forms. Chitin resolved into flesh, and then a woman of striking beauty stepped away from her brethren into the circle of attentive listeners. She smiled over the gathered children, her eyes shining with an almost maternal spark. Though Ananasa was gone, her children sensed something of her presence lingering within the three who had joined to make her whole.

When the woman began to speak, her voice confident and powerful despite the slight tremor in her limbs, the assembled spiderfolk all leaned in closer.

From our earliest days we have served Queen Ananasa. She has been our connection to the forces that dictate the universe. In our beginnings, we actually did her bidding in

the Umbra, the place where spirits dwell. The events she spoke of did take place, but not in weeks or years or even decades, but rather over the course of centuries. We were among Ananasa's builders. As spirits we helped weave the very universe around us, forming or defining the lives that exist even today. The Mother-Queen made us to aid her in her work, just as the Weaver made her to assist in shaping the universe. Our spirits were made to balance, to bring order to the universe, just as many of the spirits serving the Weaver were made for the same purpose.

But when the first of the Changing Breeds were created, we were taken aside, placed out of harm's way by the Mother, and given new instructions. Just as our physical counterparts were made to watch over the insects and keep them from growing too greedy, we were remade for a similar purpose.

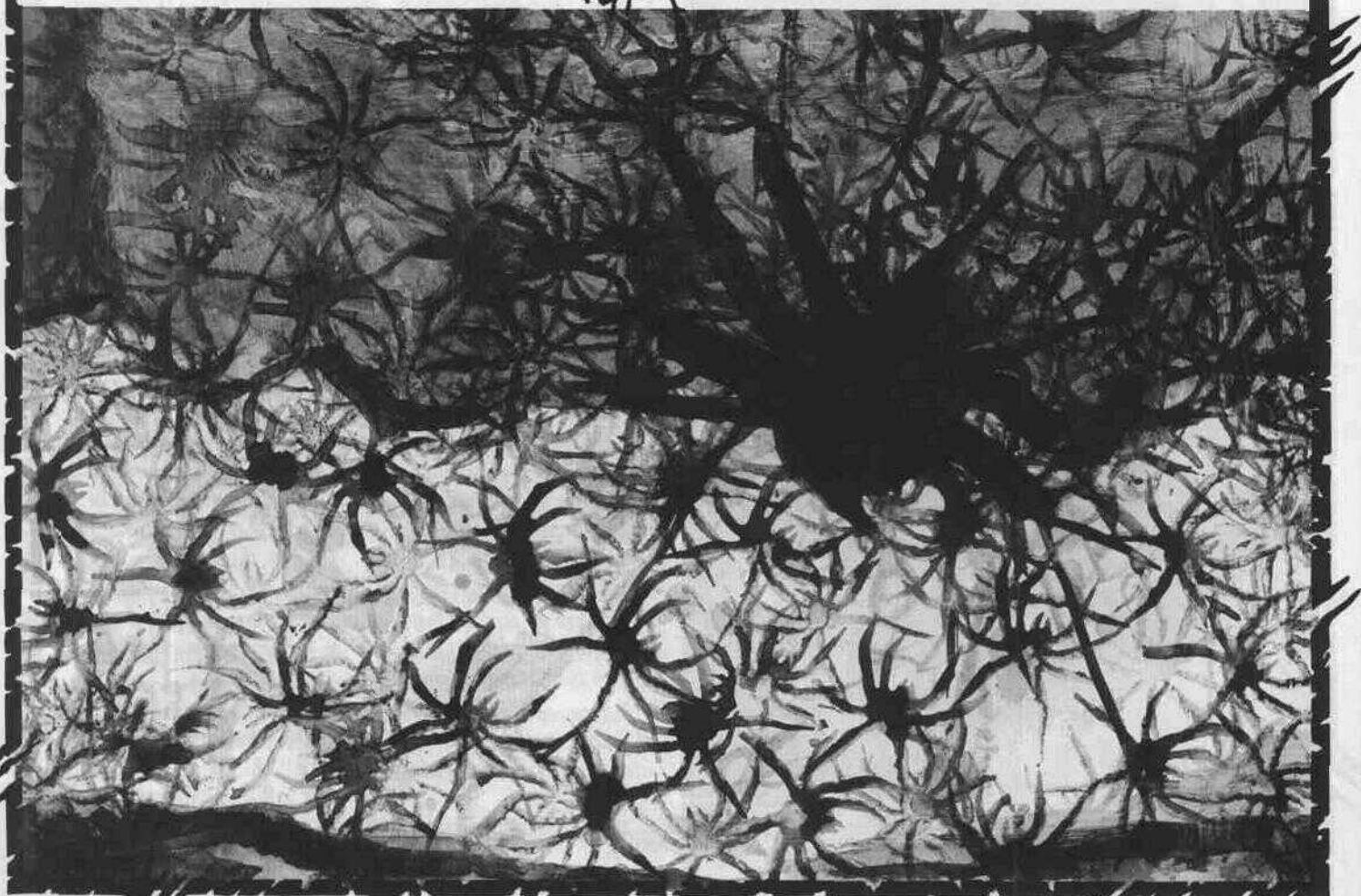
The First Circle

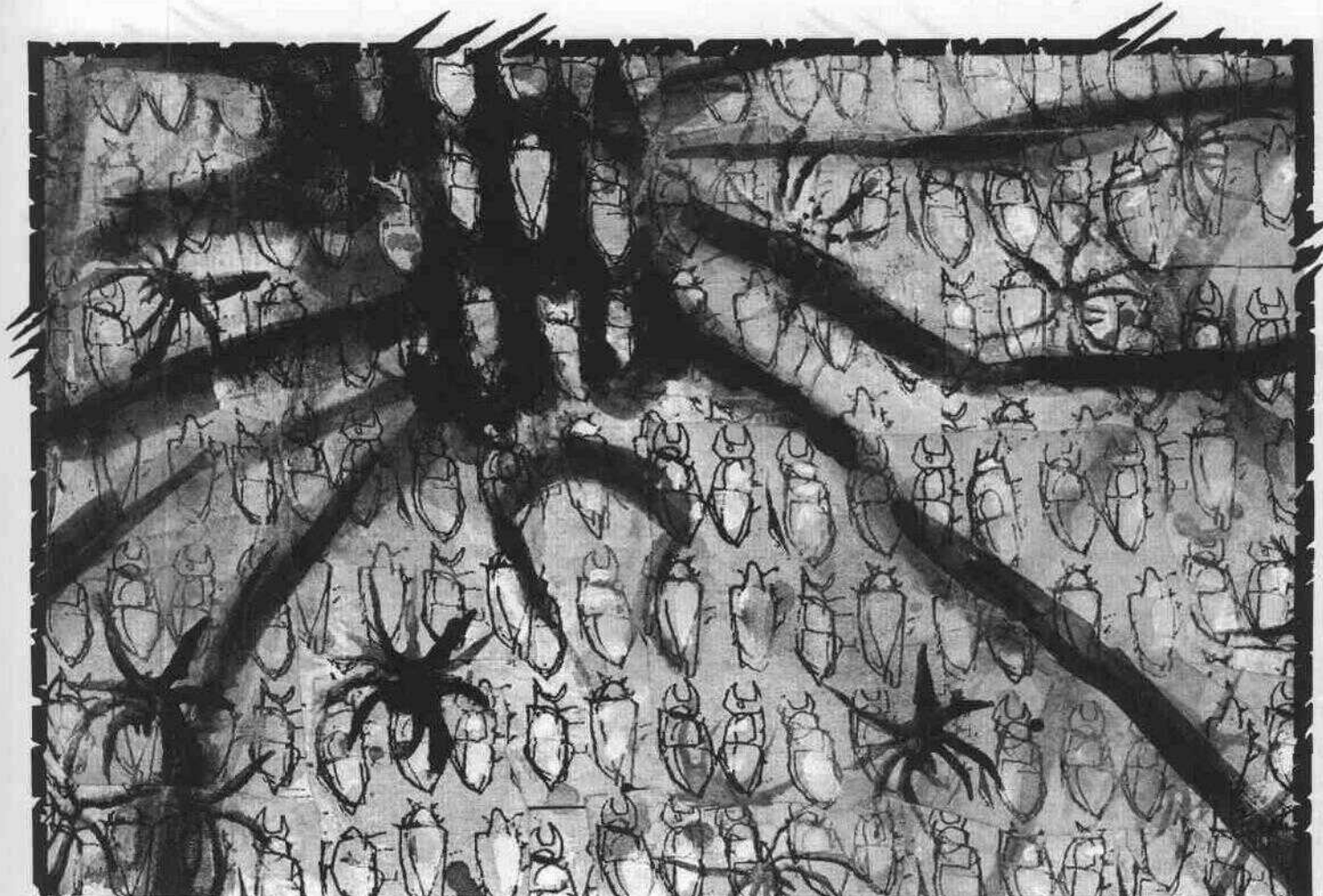
Most people — both human and otherwise — believe that our kind originated in the lands known as Africa. This is the truth, and it is a lie as well. When our most blessed of mothers, the great Queen Ananasa, was placed in her jail, she began to understand the insanity of her creator and captor. In her understanding, she began searching for the means to reach the outside, and bring sanity to the insane. From her cell, she sought a place outside of the direct control of The Weaver, or even her siblings Wyrn and Wyld, to sow her seeds of the future. This world is that place, and we, her children, are those seeds.

When she first touched this world, there was no place called Africa, nor did the same location have a different name. No, our kind is far older than that. When Ananasa first touched the world, it was a simple place, with only one land. That place had no name, it was simply the Land. Today, historians refer to it as Pangaea. The name suits it; it perfectly describes our view of the world of the past — and the world of the future — with its meaning, "a unified Earth-Mother."

Where precisely did we begin? Nowhere famous. The Simyan Mountains are a moderately sized range that cut along the coast of our ancestral continent. It was here that Ananasa first placed us on the Earth to serve her. Deep within the bowels of those hills, in caves that were then and may still be unsullied by human eyes, one spider grew into many. And that spider became a beast to rival any that walked the world. That simple creature moved up out of the dark and began to feed on the very creatures that once fed upon it. Some will tell you that it was a male, while others will insist that it was a female. What must be remembered is the one simple truth: it was the first. Gender is irrelevant. Without one, the other would have no role in Ananasa's plans. I can tell you this much for certain: that one, the very first of our kind, was called *Anansi*.

Shortly thereafter, Anansi began to breed, and the Ananasi were no longer an idiosyncrasy, but a force to be feared. To answer the next question on your mind, no, we were not the first. We came after Brother Mokolé and Brother Rokea, but before all the others. Like our earlier brothers, we





were not things that took the shapes of humans — at least not at first. We lived in a time of monsters, and our shape was that of a monster. We were massive creatures capable of great violence, but we were nothing compared to the beasts that already prowled the world. Ananasa knew to give us the power to survive, but more, she knew that we needed the intelligence to survive and thrive in this primal garden. So we hid in the caves, we lured in prey, and we kept away from the great creatures that would have destroyed us as best we could. The creatures outnumbered us by too much, though, and we died as much as we lived. Ananasa foresaw this fact, too.

From the deserts, the jungles, and the great plains we rose up. We sprang from every corner of the land, and we grew in numbers. To prevent our death, we rose up in life. Ananasa didn't want one finger in the world — she wanted eight. And so she extended her grasp into this world eight times; each finger that she brought into the world was one more place that she could bring herself in touch with the world.

By the time that all eight fingers came into the world, there were eight new creations each the same as before, but none of them identical. With so many intrusions into life, there was nothing that death could do but surrender us to life. We began to flourish after a time, and spread throughout the world. Sisters and brothers met each other, and the web of life covered the land.

Then, a curious thing happened: The land began to spread throughout the seas. We became separated from our

brothers and sisters by land, and were forced to discover a new way to keep the web intact. Unlike any of our rivals — Brother Mokolé and Brother Rokea — we were not limited to our larger size. We discovered that our gigantic stature wasn't the key to our future, but rather the opposite. By returning to our beginning, we were able to come into contact with the essence of Ananasa, and through that communion, keep in contact with all of our others. As the land began to surround the globe, we went with it, and we created a connection that mortals still do not understand. A circle was created, and from that outermost circle, we learned to see, communicate through and become one with, the Great Web.

Our First Purpose

Weaver made the Insect-people to create order, to enforce the beliefs of Weaver above all else. Ananasa did not agree with that decision. She had seen that Wyld and Wyrn both served their purposes, and so she made a contingency plan. We are the fruit of her labors.

Our duty was to protect the interests of Queen Ananasa — and those interests, as she made clear, are her own, not the Triat's.

The Insect Races rose up, prepared to destroy everything. This was before the Mammals came to be, before the Garou, the Nuwisha and the Gurahl, before the Bastet, the Ratkin and even the Nagah. The Corax were not present, for even feathers were a thing not yet designed by the

Weaver. The Mokolé, for all their strength and wisdom, were not the proper soldiers to fight against the Insects. They were too large, too slow to do battle with the armies that assaulted them. The Rokea were not capable of straying from the water for long, and they too were not prepared for the battle ahead. But we were designed for just such a task.

Have you noticed the differences in your mind since you first Changed? You are not as warm as you might have been. The flowers do not hold the same beauty for you as they did, and likely your families are no longer as important as they were. This too is Ananasa's doing. We are cold and merciless because we must be. We are hunters, destroyers and builders. All of these tasks require a certain... distance from the objects we must work with. The Insect Races were much the same way, but they were far more single-minded than we are.

The war was swift and merciless. The Insects fought hard, hurting many of our kind, but they could not win the battle. For all their ferocity, they lacked imagination. For all their numbers, they lacked independence of thought and action. Though many had wings, none of the enemies had webs. We did not stop the war even when they were prepared to surrender. Insects have long memories, and they were far too prolific for us to let them survive. Well before the Garou's War of Rage, we fought and annihilated the Insect Races. They could not be trusted and they could not accept change. We did this because Queen Ananasa demanded it of us. We were glad to aid her, and we feasted as we have seldom feasted since.

We did not destroy the spirits of the insects. Those we captured and made our own, reweaving their forms until they were no longer capable of being joined with flesh, never a part of the Changing Breeds. This too, was the order of Ananasa. All that remains of the great Insect Races is our memories, and the Gifts they've taught us over the centuries.

The War in the Heavens was not finished, and by the time it was over, the Wyld had created more of the Changing Breeds. They were young, and we left them in peace for they were not a part of our world, and because Ananasa wanted them left alone.

At last, Weaver finished binding Wyrms in her webs. When she was done, she looked upon Gaia and roared her outrage to the world. Her precious Insects were gone, and mammals stood where there had been none before. Though she was angry, she dared not violate the rules again, for even then she feared the Wyld's rage. Instead she did what she was best at, and began weaving the Great Web.

The Earliest Days: Ananasa's Web

As a colony in one land, we thrived and grew together. As a colony that spread across many lands, we encountered new problems. Some of those problems were foreseen, while others came from very surprising sources.

From within, we found that our connection with each other was something more than just a link of ideas and concepts. We discovered that Ananasa has a role for each of us, and that we are to accept those roles, no matter how

painful the realization. The first discovery came from the brothers that traveled with the lands to the south, in the land that would one day become known as Antarctica. As the land moved south, the native creatures began to die out, leaving our brethren little food. The reason for their deaths soon took effect on the Ananasi, as the cold proved to be the first great enemy. When Ananasa brought us to live in this world, it was a lush, green paradise. The cold was a rare thing, and it only lasted a short time. We were made to live in this warm climate, with creatures that lived in this climate, and the changes in the planet brought about the first lesson from Ananasa: we are not indestructible. Many of the Ananasi died in learning this, and in honor of those that have taught us from the past, Antarctica remains a land free from our kind.

As a result of our first lesson, we took steps to see that we would not suffer in the same way, and in doing so learned our second lesson. As the world aged, a new species rose up to join us as the intelligence of the planet: humans. The human was more adaptable to the climate, though not as sturdy a life form in other ways. Ananasa saw the wisdom of this new species, and brought us together for the first time to create the identity that you now know as the modern Ananasi. Once again, Ananasa struck through her strongest, first hold on this world, in the land that we now call Africa. At once, we relished in our new bodies. There were sensations and forms that we had never encountered before, and in some ways this was intoxicating. We began to seek out the humans as companions, and even went so far as to take on the role of gods in their eyes. They worshipped us for our power, and we used them for their forms and for their blood. This proved to be our second lesson. It is important to remember that our greatest enemy on this world is not another of the shapechangers, but the form that they assume.

Mankind has proven to be a formidable foe; they do not look upon gods with favor forever, and when you drop from the highest of places, you fall to the pits of their hatred. We were an arrogant race, feeding on them with wanton abandon, demanding sacrifice for our knowledge. For a time, this inspired fear, and fear inspired devout obedience. But fear can also create resentment, and from that bitter emotion arises danger. We went from being those that they worshipped, to those that they hunted and hated. They have passed knowledge of our kind from legend to legend, and we have been installed into their very beings as a creature of revile and hate. You must always remember that your true form is something that is the very essence of the human nightmare. Use this to your advantage, and hide it for your protection.

With the rise of man, they did something that no other creature had before them: change the world around them. They formed communities, which grew into villages, and towns, and cities, and the vast metropolises that surround the world today. As man moved into the city, we moved with them, at least in part. Our human form may seem to be an inconvenience, clumsy and awkward in its shape, but there is a strength that can be gained by moving closest to your enemies. First, it keeps your other enemies at bay, lest they find themselves at odds with the humans as well. Secondly, as



I'm sure you are well aware, humans are a necessity. In days of old, before we had our human shapes, we could survive on the blood of animals; now, to help us maintain our semblance of humanity, we must join with the blood of humans.

The soft form of a human isn't easy to maintain. It lacks the stability of our Queen's body, and the shape in which she first made us on this world. We must constantly infuse the essence of the human into our colony. We accomplish this feat in two ways; through blood and through brood. Neither of these things came easily, but as we learned, both have their advantages.

Their blood is power. If we drink deeply from the human we gain not only their lives, but also the strength of their souls. Ananasa has taught us to channel that blood into a number of tools. She furthers her cause by making us powerful. Blood can make us more than what we are born into, and more than the humans can comprehend. But the power that blood grants is dangerous. It is intoxicating. We wanted too much, and we wanted it in force, causing the blood to become the most important thing in our life. We, in our arrogance, thought that there was no greater gift than that of the blood — but it is the use of the brood that created Ananasi as we are today.

As the world expanded, the humans grew into the dominant species, the Changing Breeds came into being around the world, and the Children of Ananasa took hold in all the corners of the Earth. Our exodus throughout the world starts in our beginning in Africa, in the Simyan Mountains, with the first Ananasi born of a human mother. This sacred event happened about 100,000 years ago. Ananasa chose this

site for a simple reason: she foresaw the coming of the dominant species of man, and chose them as the host for her human-born warriors. This is one of the finest moments in history, as we moved from one form to another — yet again. Born of humans, raised as humans, and living among humans it became easier than ever before to gain the power of the blood that we so desperately needed. The Children in Africa thought that they had achieved our ultimate form on Earth, but Ananasa did not want one form... when many are better.

In Europe, she began to breed humans of another form. More primitive, yet more powerful than the humans in Africa, these creatures had their own role, serving to pave the way for the species yet to come. Our kind had to be established with the humans all over the world, so that the future would let us exist as one colony. The first Ananasi of this Neanderthal race was born almost 70,000 years ago.

So it went throughout the world, with the Ananasi joining the humans to create a new breed. Each part of the world growing its own unique creation, with its own strength and its own society, slowly working towards the goal that Ananasa foresaw from the day that she first combined her Children with the children of the Earth: unity.

So it was that 30,000 years ago, a mere drop of time on the skein of our existence, that the weeding of mankind began. The world began to warm once again, and the less physical, more intellectual peoples of the world began to move throughout the lands. They established themselves as the superior species among the humans, and the Children of Ananasa knew that they must



follow suit. So it was that the greatest tragedy in our history occurred. In the area that is now called Yugoslavia, in a city that was known as Krapina, the Neanderthal Ananasi gathered at the will of the Great Mother and destroyed all of the humans of the city in a feeding frenzy that lasted over five days. When the last of the humans died, they turned on themselves, and the Ananasi fed on Ananasi — not out of hunger, but out of necessity. All of the Children of Ananasa from that region died in a space of less than three days. This was the first great death, and it shall always be remembered. It is not remembered with pain; Ananasa took the human frailty of pain from us at this time, making us understand the will of the Mother is greater than the frailty of the Children.

The death of the lesser Ananasi cleared the path for our second birth. All things in life are built on the triumvirate, and our first physical birth began the web, while the second birth began spinning the pattern. When the time is right, Ananasa will guide us to the completion of the web, and the third birth — the Great Birth itself — will lead us to our ultimate goal.

With the Children that remained — the greater Ananasi — a link was forged. As they grew out of Africa, they left behind them a trail, each point connected to the last. Over a period of 10,000 years the Ananasi traveled in both human guise, and as the hunter that followed the prey, until they had encompassed the world. Our kind knew the workings of their brethren on the opposite end of the globe, and they know these actions to this very day. This link is called Ananasa's Web. By keeping in connection with the Ananasi nearest you, you will always know what they are doing, and the next down the line will learn from them, and this will continue until the will of one is the will of all, and all serve the will of Ananasa. You may think of your own plans, and act on your own impulse, but all is under the guidance of the Great Mother. She is the force that keeps us all linked, and she is the will that keeps us all alive. Through this link we are all of one purpose; Ananasa's Web is the ultimate extension of Ananasa's wisdom, keeping her children organized despite themselves. We may fight, even to the point of war with ourselves and others, but it is all under the leadership of the Mother-Queen.

One of our kind did not take the same path as we in this lesson. The colony that took to the lands of eastern Asia created a very different life for themselves, taking the human identity as only a guideline, and breaking from the strands of Ananasa's Web. Our brethren there have decided to take the name of Kumo, and they now follow the way of the Wyrms. It is obvious that Ananasa has allowed them this action, giving them the free will to allow the corruption to enter their body, yet it is well known that they continue to serve our Queen in their actions. The path that Ananasa has set them upon is one that we do not understand, but who are we to question the will of our Creator?

With hardly a thought for the consequences, Weaver started separating the spirit from the flesh in an effort to prevent Wyld ever creating another form of Changing Breed. Wyld tried to resist but could not. With Weaver bound to the imprisoned Wyrms, using Wyrms' powers to a certain extent, Wyld was weakened. Symmetry was lost. The Great Web was spun, and the spirits that tried to break through the barrier

often found themselves stuck in the Web. Even as the first strands of the Web fell in place, the damage was done to Gaia. In those days there was only one continent upon Gaia's back, Pangaea. The great continent shattered, drifting across the waters and settling as several smaller places. Now there is not only one land, but multitudes of lands. That was not how Gaia was created, but that is how she stands now, fractured, injured but healing. The strands of the Great Web hold the continents in place, but barely. There are places where the continents shake and fracture, where the webs that pulled Pangaea apart are so strong that they cause the very land to crumble.

Weaver would have worked faster, but the new order caused problems for her as well. The Wyrms continued to struggle, trying to break free and do his work, but it was not meant to be. All Wyrms managed to do was hurt himself, until eventually his mind broke. His balance was destroyed.

The Triat was broken and the symmetry of the universe destroyed. Though it took centuries, possibly even millennia, Wyrms was eventually able to begin his work again, but his goals were distorted by the pain he endured. He no longer sought to devour or to Uncreate, but rather to Recreate in his own warped image. Wyld continued on, creating and changing. Weaver had no choice but to finish what Wyld started, and spent much of her time shaping the things created by Wyld. For that reason, the Great Web has never been completed — though of late, the task is getting closer to finished than is comfortable. You see, while each member of the Triat does its job to the best of its ability, the balance is gone. Weaver has grown more powerful, and Wyld grows ever weaker. Wyrms is distracted and cannot do what he must; his pain and madness eat at him constantly. The Great Web grows stronger, separating the Umbra from the Gaia Realm, crushing the Changing Breeds' connections with their spiritual halves and making it more difficult for them to do what Gaia and the Wyld demanded of them. The Great Web has become a flawed, tangled mess, and no self-respecting spider can stand a messy web.

Ananasa tried to stop Weaver from breaking the spirit and the flesh, but she was punished for her indiscretion. Weaver imprisoned Ananasa in an opal the likes of which had never existed before. It was a gem of pure stasis, flawless and complete, without the smallest weakness. She then threw Ananasa to the Wyrms, believing that Wyrms would devour her.

She was wrong. Wyrms is insane, but he has not forgotten his love of Weaver. Weaver is not his to possess, but Ananasa is. So he holds Ananasa as a treasure, one that must be preserved and cherished. More importantly, and more unfortunately, for a time she was a tool by which he could control her Children, the Ananasi.

The Time of Madness

The woman rested a moment, stepping back from her students and allowing another to come forward. She was dark where the first speaker was light, but just as beautiful. Where her predecessor walked with calculated grace, she moved with deadly precision. Hers was the gait of a hunter.

The Wyrms held Ananasa silent for a great length of time, leaving us to believe our God had abandoned us. During the Great Silence, humans were born, and as with the other Changing Breeds, we were drawn into them. They were soon to be the dominant species, and they were even then touched by the Weaver. The Weaver wanted nothing to do with us, was enraged by the actions we had made against her, and so the Wyld merged us with the humans. We became as we are now, one part spider, one part spirit and one part human. As with all the Changing Breeds, we had a symmetry lacking in most of the other creatures on Gaia's back.

Despite the absence of the Mother-Queen, we continued on, doing as we always had, ensuring the Insects would never return to plague Gaia again. The Weaver's silence was considered an ill omen by most, but Wyld still looked out for us, giving us aid when he could and guiding us gently. Many of the Ananasi began looking to the Wyld as a surrogate, and some even began to follow his tenets, seeking protection from the wrath of the Weaver. Most did not.

Then Wyrms made his presence known to us. Wyrms sent his minions to talk to our leaders, and explained that Ananasa was alive, but now his captive. He made an offer to spare Ananasa, if we, her children, would serve him faithfully. We had no choice. We agreed.

Wyrms is insane. Make no mistake about that. His struggles against the Weaver shattered his mind into fragments, and each fragment has its own agenda. There's no great determination on Wyrms's part to make us follow a particular path. Instead the Dark Ones, the messengers of the Corrupter, told us what to do, and in order to keep Queen Ananasa safe, we did it. Often the tasks made no sense. Perhaps we would be forced to kill entire villages of people, perhaps we would simply be told to give the local humans who looked to us for advice the wrong answers to their questions. There was no rhyme or reason to our tasks. At least there didn't seem to be any.

In truth, Wyrms is cunning in his insanity. He worked not only against his enemies, but also against the will of some of the Damhàn. He worked slowly and patiently, corrupting them and twisting their views away from where they should have been. Over the course of almost 200 years, Wyrms insinuated his philosophies into the minds of our ancestors, twisting them from the inside. And we, who were never prepared for this sort of situation, let him. There came a point where the silence from the Mother-Queen was no longer an emptiness in all of us. For some, that void had been filled with Wyrms's poisons.

Even when the situation was at its very worst, there were those of us who held on to the belief that Ananasa was alive, and looked to that fact as our saving grace. Principal among our leaders at that time was a male, one of Ananasa's chosen, who had lived for centuries already. His name was Anansi, and there are some who claim he was the very first of us to hatch, and the first to touch Gaia. Others merely say he was the first of us to follow the Wyld, turning away from Weaver and Wyrms, and seeing them as weak in their twisted states. Only Ananasa can say for certain what the truth might be in this matter.





Anansi was almost unique among us. He reveled in the feelings of human emotions and he thrived on the challenges each day found for him. He lived a life that most of us could never hope to fully understand. Emotion is a foreign thing to most of us, muted and barely understood. We were not meant to dwell on past victories and defeats, we were designed to handle the tasks before us, and Ananasa always felt that emotions could be a great hindrance to accomplishing our goals. Most of you born of humans have already realized the fact that little of your past lives is significant. That is the *Blessing of Ananasa*. She protects us from our pasts, from the dangers of too much love and too much hatred. She keeps us strong, that we might do her work. We are truly lucky and should be grateful for this gift.

Anansi did not fall to the Wyrms' ways when he heard about his Queen's capture. Instead he climbed the Great Web, leaving Gaia behind in order to search for her throughout the Umbra. His quest was long and painful, and there were times when he must surely have despaired of ever finding her. Still, he persisted. When he left he made clear to his followers that they must not, under any circumstances, obey the Wyrms or his minions. They obeyed him.

While all around the world, the Damhàn turned to the service of the Wyrms in order to keep Queen Ananasa safe, Anansi himself continued his quest. Long before he was finished, the Ovid discovered what had happened, but not everything that had happened. They saw that we had become servants of the Corrupter and lashed out against us, claiming that we were their enemies. First among our accusers were the Garou, werewolves and fierce warriors. They used our time of servitude as an excuse, attacking not only us, but the other Changing Breeds as well.

I need to reiterate something to you before you can completely understand the magnitude of what they did: Gaia created most of the Ovid. The spirit of the Earth, gave each Breed a goal to accomplish. But we were not created by Gaia, we were created by Queen Ananasa, and we were given no such tasks. Our creator was silent, captured by the Weaver's deceptions and thrown to the Wyrms. We were a lost people, and in us the Wyrms found easy prey.

Somewhere along the way, the Garou fell to arrogance. They decided that their goals were the same as Gaia's and that they should handle the matters of protecting the planet. They had long ago said to us that we were not needed, that we were obsolete. We did not agree. Long before the Wyrms took hold of us, there was enmity between our race and theirs. The bitterness was seeded by their arrogance, by the presumption that their words were more important than ours, the self-assurance that they could better handle the humans we advised than we could. Skirmishes had previously broken out from time to time, but never to the magnitude we would soon know.

Just as the Wyrms used us as servants, the Garou used us as an example. The arguments between our people had never been substantial: We ignored their petty cries to leave the humans alone. They claimed sacred right to cull the



herds of humans, to choose those who could live and those who would die at their claws. They called this sacred duty of theirs the "Impergium" and held it as their most trusted charge. They used this claim of theirs to start the War of Rage, and they used us as an example. Over the course of several years they did all they could to destroy our Kinfolk, never understanding the ways in which we dealt with the humans we sometimes use as mates.

We are not an emotional race, but we are a proud race nonetheless. The Wyrms took note of what they did, and he fed our pride, fueled angers such as we had never known before, and demanded that we retaliate.

Many among the Garou ask themselves what started the War of Rage. We know. We started it, because they pushed us too far. With whispers of our own we told the other Ovid what they had done, and we also told them they would likely be next. In a few cases, where we were apparently wrong, we helped fan the flames, determined to make the "Warriors of Gaia" pay for their insolence. Before long, all the Ovid were engaged in a war with the Garou.

And in the Umbra, Anansi kept looking, until he found the home of the Wyrms, the place called Malfeas. He moved carefully, quietly, and finally, he found our queen. She was locked away, held captive within an opal of incredible size and impossible strength. Try though he might, he could not free her.

Ananasa saw her chosen, and smiled. Though she could not speak to him, she made her desires clear. She did not want freedom from her opal prison, for that powerful gem offered her protection from the Wyrms' foul embrace. What she wanted was the ability to speak to her children again. Anansi left her in the Wyrms' lair and made his way back to the Gaia Realm.

What he found there angered him, and shocked him beyond words. Entire races of the Ovid were gone, destroyed by the War of Rage. Still, he had a duty to perform, and that took priority over his feelings about the war. His followers told him all that had happened in his absence, and Anansi began to scheme. Anansi gave the matter contemplation for almost a full month, and then he prepared himself. If all went as planned, he would stop the war and aid his Queen at the same time.

Anansi went to the Corax, and told them that he knew of a treasure too perfect to be denied. When they asked him more questions, he hemmed and hawed until he knew they would bite, and told them where the treasure was. The Corax considered the treasure and knew they had to have it, but also knew they could not survive a journey to Malfeas. The Corax, who remained neutral in the War of Rage, in turn told the Garou of the treasure, claiming that the Opal was nothing less than the Heart of the Wyrms, and that if they could get their hands on it, they could destroy the evil influences of the Corrupter, freeing Gaia.

And the Garou fell for it, just as Anansi knew they would. The greatest warriors of the Garou gathered together and made their plans, taking information from Anansi — given freely to the Corax, who gave it to the werewolves — and prepared for their greatest assault. They would storm the Wyrms' lair and

capture his heart, freeing the world. They sang songs of conquest, and in the process they called more warriors to them, forgetting their sacred war against the other Ovid.

The Changing Breeds that remained took advantage of the lull and beat a hasty retreat, hiding in most cases, fighting on in others. The Garou stormed the Deep Umbra, attacking Malfeas and seeking the Heart of the Wyrms. Many of them died, and they were the lucky ones. Others were taken by the Wyrms and devoured, regurgitated only when he was done twisting their minds and bodies as he had been doing to the Ananasi for years. Those Garou still live, hidden in the darkest places slowly fighting the war that we once fought for the Corrupter.

The Opal was drawn from the bowels of Malfeas, blackened by the efforts of the Wyrms to break into the prison that held our Queen. The Garou attacked it again and again, doing everything they could to destroy the prison, foolishly believing that they could kill the Wyrms with such ease. Finally, after they had reached the point where they hoped to escape with the Heart and take it to another place, a safer place, Ananasa made her presence known, thanking them for aiding her. Despite their best efforts, they could not break the Opal, but with their help, she had managed to create a flaw, one large enough to suit her purposes, and small enough not to cause her any risk at the hands of the Wyrms.

The Garou were outraged! They howled their defiance to the stars, ready to war against the Corax. They likely would have too, if Anansi had not spoken up and told them that the Corax were also pawns. For while Anansi did not mind using the werewolves for his purposes, he did not want them to suffer for his actions. That was not his intention. With a simple claim of credit for all the Garou had accomplished and suffered, he drove the werewolves to hate him far more than the other Ovid. They chose to take their anger out on the Ananasi, and Anansi planned to let them... after a fashion.

Have you ever tried to hunt down something that didn't want to be hunted? It can be a challenge. Wolves are large; spiders are small. We can hide almost anywhere. We can be hidden in a thousand places, no one ever the wiser. There are distinct advantages to being a small army of spiders, especially when the Garou are on your trail.

The Garou searched, tried their best to find us, and in many cases their best was sufficient. But we have always been patient, and we have always been willing to make sacrifices for the sake of Ananasa. Some of us died that the rest might live. They are remembered.

Perhaps the war between our races would have continued forever, but we had other plans. We had other problems. Not all of us returned to the fold when Ananasa spoke to us. Some stayed with the Wyrms, traitorous vermin who call themselves the Kumo. They are not our kind; the Wyrms has seen to that. They are mockeries of what we are, what we were meant to be. They have lost the symmetry to be complete. Make no mistake about this, the Kumo are vile. Should you

see them, destroy them. They no longer recognize the face of the Mother-Queen, and that is an unforgivable sin.

But we shall talk more of them later. For now we talk of our history. The changes we have endured for the love of our queen.

Great Ananasa spoke to us, a rare thing, far rarer even than meeting her as you have just now. For she spoke to all of us, a drain on her power and dangerous in that it could have revealed her presence to the Wyrn. She told us that we had done well in her absence, and warned us of the trials to come. "You will be hated and feared," she said, and so we were, and so we are. "You will suffer great losses in my name," and so we did and so we have. "In the end, you will be triumphant, for you will know that my way is the only clear path to follow." And we have followed her way ever since, and in small measures, we have seen the truth of her words. Victory and redemption do not have to be fast, nor do they have to be complete. We are not called the Patient Ones without good reason.

After the First War of Rage

The world began to change not long after the War of Rage. Perhaps the changes were actually in place before then, but if so they were not evident. What, you might ask was the biggest, most immediate change? Well, that would be the release of the humans from the Garou's Impergium.

Somewhere along the way the Wolves changed their minds. They decided that humans should not be culled, but should rather be allowed to multiply, to expand their horizons and grow in numbers. I have heard this decision called wise and foolish in equal measure. I have heard the Children of Gaia speak of the resulting changes that have come about as good things, and I've heard the same from the Glass Walkers and the Bone Gnawers. I have also heard the other werewolf tribes speak of the same decision with regret, and many have contemplated returning to the old ways—sometimes realizing that any such decision would come far too late to do any good.

I have heard it called many things, but always these answers skirt around the issue. What caused this change in the Garou mentality? What made them suddenly decide that their human Kinfolk should be allowed to propagate in numbers undreamed of?

The answer is simple, brothers and sisters. The answer is the Weaver.

Weaver saw the potential in humans, their desire to be so much more than they already were, their penchant for tools, and their desire to understand the universe around them, and decided they could use a helping hand. With Ananasa out of the way, no longer able to speak of balance and symmetry, Weaver found a new assistant in her grandest schemes, one only too willing to learn and to help. Weaver grew stronger, and all the while, we sat and waited, we learned what we needed to learn from our Queen.

There was a time when the Garou thought they'd all but destroyed us. We did nothing to disillusion them. They beat their chests with typical hatred and savagery, while we watched and learned.

Then they did what we always knew they would do; they turned upon themselves with no others to fight. That particular battle continues even today. The Garou fight themselves endlessly, often with words, sometimes with weapons, each convinced that their way is the only possible way to save the world from the Wyrn. We are an arrogant race, but we can admit to our flaws and work towards surviving them. The Garou have never been as fortunate.

Over the centuries we have watched them do their work, carrying out their sacred duties to Gaia and the Wyld, never understanding what they have lost along the way. We do not follow the Wyld, we do not follow the Weaver or the Wyrn. We follow Ananasa, and we allow ourselves to be a part of her tapestry, the plan she is weaving to rectify all that is wrong with the world and the Triat. We are threads upon her skein, and if we fail to see all of the patterns, we can rest easy in the knowledge that she shows us what we must see.

Queen Ananasa told us to wait, to be patient, and to learn. We did so. But what she did not explain, what we do not fully understand even now, is what she taught us in the time after the First War of Rage.

Ananasa spoke to the strongest, wisest members of her Children, speaking to each separately, and she gave instructions to them on how she wanted her Children led. She spoke to Anansi and his brethren, telling them that they should follow the laws of the Wyld, reveling in change and chaos, but cautioned them to never forget that they are Ananasi, and therefore forged from equal parts of the Triat. Anansi spoke to his brethren, and they soon turned to the path of the Kumoti, followers of the Wyld's Ways. She spoke to others, telling them that Weaver's Way was best, but cautioned them again to remember their birthright as the first spirits crafted by Weaver, Wyrn and Wyld. She made clear to them that they should respect all parts of the Triat as necessary, but also cautioned them that Weaver was mad, and Wyrn fractured and insane. Arachne was the first to lead the Tenere, who follow the path of order as Weaver was meant to. Lastly, she spoke to the remaining leaders of the Ananasi, ordering them to follow the Wyrn, not as he exists now, but as he once was. "Wyrn no longer knows how to control his impulses," she cautioned. "He no longer knows what must die and what should live on. Do not fall to this trap. Remember that all things should exist if they were created by Wyld and shaped by Weaver." All were told to follow separate paths, and all were told to follow those paths as best they could, never forgetting that they were a part of the Triat. Hatar was the first to lead the Hatar, who must follow the path the Wyrn once followed.

One last warning she gave to the Damhàn: "You have betrayed the trust of the other Ovid, making a great sacrifice on my behalf. For this I love you. But you have made enemies that will neither forgive nor forget what you have done. Now you must each follow your own way, and you must be merciless in the pursuit of your goals. The other Ovid are young and often foolish, they haven't your understanding of the universe. They will attack you, and they will try to kill you. For that reason, you must never forget that you are family. Family is strong where those

who stand alone are weak. In all times, during all events, you must follow the paths I have chosen for you. You may meet again and fight and even kill each other, but you must not tolerate those of Gaia's Children who would kill your family. You must fight together against the Ovid if one of you is attacked, for even when your goals are opposed, even when you kill one another, none should ever let their family be destroyed by outsiders."

This Ananasa commanded, and this we do. We may walk among the Mammals, we may slither near the Reptiles and we may even find reason to swim with the Fishes, but we are Spiders. Should all the Ovid gather together and join forces with the Kumoti against the Hatar, still we must never let them assault one of ours and be forgiven. Though we might kill each other, we must always defend our brethren. We are family, we are the Children of Ananasa, and even in our greatest wars against each other, we must remember that.

Ananasa's ways are not always ours to know, but the rules she gave us are there to help us survive in our ignorance. Since the end of the First War of Rage, we have distanced ourselves from the fights of the Garou and the sacred duties of the other Changing Breeds, as Ananasa demanded. But we have not been idle. We are at war. Away from this place, away from the Webs we have established where peace must rule, we are enemies. I have fought against the very Damhàn who stand with me now as your instructors. We have not been friends, but we have always been family.

The Weaver's Revenge

An old man came doddering up next, carrying with him scores of rolled-up paper of some size. The pages were so large and voluminous that they almost hid the tiny man that carried them. When he reached the stopping point of his journey, he slowly and carefully began to place the pages on the ground, taking time to turn them the direction that he desired.

When he was finished, he turned and looked out at the gathered assembly. He looked at each person directly, meeting their eyes and then moving to the next. When he was finished, he reached down and picked up a small easel, setting it beside him.

To the assembled, he seemed almost fragile. He was small, and weathered to the bone. It seemed as though any sudden movement would break him. Many even felt pity for him, and dreaded becoming like him in later years — which was exactly what he wanted.

He set up the first of his pages on the easel. It was an illustrated image of a man, showing the internal organs, and where they sat in the body — but a man without normal human organs. This was an Ananasi, and these were their innards.

He smiled, and the young spiders felt a sudden chill rush through their bodies. "Now, little ones, we will talk about what it is that will kill you."

When our Great Mother, Ananasa, created us, she did so with loving care and careful design. She made it so we were the ultimate hunters, fearing no other life, as they are all beneath us. Even her wisdom could not foresee the anger of her creator at this action, and in an act of pure jealousy, the Weaver made her displeasure known.

Your body is carefully armored to protect you from harm, keeping you safe from any natural form of attack, you see. Weaver looked at this and wanted us to have a weakness. If you look at the body of the Ananasi, you will notice that we are perfectly structured. Our organs are placed at the optimum location for defense. Our skin is rigid, preventing minor attacks entirely, and deflecting other attacks away from our vitals. We are perfect killers, and Weaver hates perfection she did not shape herself.

And so, she formed our imperfection. A horrible attack upon us, and upon Queen Ananasa herself. Weaver gave a gift to our enemies that could destroy us. A brutal gift without remorse or consideration for her own child's creation. If it had been one simple thing, we could overcome it, but this is not simple, it is dangerous.

Weaver gave man the ability to make weapons. Oh, I can hear you scoffing my words. What are the weapons of mere humans to you? How does this affect you? Well, that is the sign of your ignorance. One man with a spear, a sword, a gun; no, he is no threat. A group of men with their bare fists — again, hardly dangerous. But we must always be careful of men who travel armed and in groups, because we lack the swift healing of other shapeshifters. With a full belly of blood and time to concentrate, you can mend cuts and bullet wounds easily enough, but what if you don't have time? You see, then. Weapons and numbers — these two things make humans dangerous even to us, even without the second terrible gift of the Weaver's.

Haven't you guessed? The mastery of something that can kill us completely even in Crawlerling — fire.

Within History

"What happened after the War of Rage?" The question was redundant, and none of those listening even considered answering. The new speaker was a huge man, with a distinctive Southern drawl. He was dressed in Biballs and a T-shirt, and his shoes had seen their best days a few years back. Still, not one of those assembled so much as whispered a slight as he paced forward.

"The easy answer is that we fell back, got our little groups together and licked our wounds like there was no tomorrow." He smiled, an amiable face with a hundred-watt grin and a face that said he was just shy of gullible. His smile wasn't answered — and the man nodded contentedly and began speaking again. "Fact of the matter is, that's a load of horseshit. Nothing is ever black and white in this world. We've kept busy. We've been fighting among ourselves, and following the agendas laid out for us by the Mother-Queen like there's no tomorrow. Which, I might add, there might not be if things keep on the way they are now.

"We've done amazing stuff, and the best part of it is, no one knows about most of it but us. I can't begin to tell you everything we've accomplished, but I can give you a few ideas about how we've done what we've managed, and if you're half as smart as I suspect, you'll be able to divine what I'm getting at.

He paused then, turning toward the cackling man sitting off to the side of the group, surrounded by three of the other teachers, though there was little doubt he could break from the shroud of webs that kept

him stuck to the ground. "We've already discussed our abilities to mate and increase our numbers in brief, and we'll go over it again, but I have a question for the whole lot of you. What is one of the most important things we've accomplished since the War of Rage?"

One of the students raised her hand, a delicate, well sculpted hand attached to a body that was equally deceptive. The hayseed who asked the question nodded to her, his simple smile still firmly in place. "Do you know the answer, Elizabeth?"

"Yes. We've kept the other Ovid from guessing at our true numbers."

The instructor nodded, but a frown creased his sun-darkened face. "Halfway to the right answer there, darlin'. What else have we done?"

She puzzled over that for a moment, her porcelain face almost expressionless. "We've established our power bases?" Her voice was unsure, but she brightened slightly when he nodded.

"That's right. We've built our strengths and we've established our power bases." He nodded at the Nuwisha stuck to the ground. "Go get yourself a sip of him, but don't get too greedy. We ain't finished with him by half." The girl rose with a grace and demeanor that would have shamed most debutantes, but which drew no stares from her brethren. She kept her ears carefully sharpened to the instructor's speech while she fed. The flavor was interesting, but the strength the blood gave her was incredible.

Most of what we know about the past's been handed down by our ancestors, much as you're hearing about it today, but there are exceptions. We've learned a lot in the last century or so, and we've done amazing things. The difference is, we're still around to tell it first hand.

We aren't like the other Changing Breeds. If you haven't figured that out yet, you may never get the picture. We weren't created to serve the Triat, we weren't created to save or defend Gaia. We exist solely to serve Ananasa, whom we love. To that end, the different factions of the Damhàn have done what they've been told, and we've always done it in the same sort of fashion when possible: by that I mean we've done it quietly. There are exceptions, but I'll get to them. Be patient for a while longer, and see if I don't.

Where you find our kind, you find a certain symmetry. That's important to us. The Web can't hold without it, and we can't abide a life without it either. In order to maintain that symmetry, we've always found the best way to accomplish things is the same way you build a web, one strand at a time. Spin out too much silk in one place, and the web will become a mess and collapse. And yes, before any of you ask, I'm speaking metaphorically. We are the Grandchildren of Weaver, and no matter who we follow, that's a part of us that can't be forgotten. For that reason we're methodical, and we're precise. It's in our nature just as sure as bears use the woods for their toilets.

One strand leads to the next, and from there others are spun and connected. Unlike the Garou, who can sing songs of their victories, or the Nuwisha who'll gladly go on for weeks telling tales of what they've accomplished and who they've humiliated, our victories are slow and subtle, which is the best way to handle the matter as far as we're concerned.

You don't need bragging rights as a Damhàn. The end result is obvious to anyone who knows how to look.

Major things we've accomplished? Well, there's that whole Jericho thing...

The Will of Jericho

There's one big lesson to establish our place in history. About the year that the Europeans have designated 7500 BC, one of our kind took a great step. A man who would come to be known simply as Jericho took not only the form, life, and guise of a human, he became a leader of humans. Jericho was a visionary. He understood that the humans were a disorganized race, not grasping the concept of order and structure. He brought to the city that would bear his name leadership unlike any they had seen. He guided them to build great walls to protect their city, and designed a center tower that served as the nerve center of the city. Jericho brought the humans together to save themselves.

Almost two thousand humans were under the guidance of the first Ananasi that used the human system to rise above them, as is our rightful place. He protected them, he guided them, and he fed on them as he needed. Eventually, the people came to fear for their lives and protected themselves with ancient magics and talismans in the form of skulls dyed with the flesh of the dead, and filled with the earth of the grave from which the skull was exhumed. This had the desired effect, keeping Jericho from the houses that bore these skulls on their hearth. An unseen foe had changed the course of history.

Through his own will and actions, Jericho turned a city of humans into one of the most structured societies on the planet, and paid the ultimate price. He underestimated the humans. They would not sit idly by as his will was served, even though his actions benefited their nature as no other had before, and they struck at his heart. Jericho was dead, but his city lived on, and the lesson that he taught was only beginning.

From this circumstance, the family of Jericho learned of magic, and the force that it could exert upon the living world. His family asked a great gift of Ananasa, that they, too, could learn the gift of magic so that they may weave a new web. Ananasa in her wisdom did not give them this gift directly, but let them discover magic and weave their way into the spell. The descendants of Jericho to this day are gifted with the ability to interweave with the forces of magic on a variety of levels, adding one more strand to Ananasa's web on Earth.

What else...? Lessee.... Though you'll never read of it in the history books, we were behind the abolition of slavery in much of Europe and in the United States. We did not sign the papers, we usually didn't actually fight the wars, but we were partially responsible. A woman sleeps with a powerful, influential politician. The politician explains the woes of his government, the woman suggests a solution. Oh, I guess maybe the politician disagrees, but when the grander scheme of things gets examined, he finds his lover's suggestion makes a certain sense. That's what happened in the USA, when the right words were whispered to an aide of the president. The



president listened, knowing he could trust the aide's advice, and though the Civil War was over no sooner, the scales were adjusted by the lover's suggestion. How? Simple, really. The suggestion to abolish slavery was already popular with certain factions, but more importantly, the abolitionist movement prevented other countries from interfering, except in the most subtle and secret ways. England had plans to fight with the Confederacy, to get themselves into the war for strictly financial reasons, but the when slavery was thrown in their faces as an issue, well, they just couldn't be seen backing slavery. That helped strengthen the Northern position. Why? Well, that's even easier. Might be you've noticed a lot of us are of African heritage. A good number of our kind have Kinfolk in Africa, and not a whole lot of them folks came to the US by choice. Hell, I don't reckon a single one of 'em decided getting whupped on regularly was a much better idea than living a life they were used to. I'm betting not any of 'em thought living a life of forced labor was better than being free. Lots of our Kinfolk were abused in the slave trade. What better way to resolve the situation?

Aww, hell, might as well be blunt about it. The end of slavery was merely a bonus of the entire affair. The real reason was simpler by far; we wanted the North to win, to expand the Industrial Revolution into places where it had not yet made serious strides, because it suited our goals at the time. The Wyrn was too strong, and using the Weaver to balance the situation was expedient. The Wyld would have been a preferable tool, but the Weaver was faster and more certain. There are times for each member of the Triad to grow stronger, right now and for the past few centuries, the time has been the Weaver's. Eventually the Wyld will have another turn, but not quite yet.

What else have we done? Lots of things, but few as direct in consequence. Our manipulations often take decades to bear fruit, and only rare incidents have the impact that our actions in the Civil War reflected. Oh, there have been others.

I've heard it told that the Hatar had their hand in the Inquisition. Some of our kind hold long grudges, and the name given to us by the other Ovid, "the Patient Ones" means more than most ever realize. The Inquisition was a tool, just like any other, but one that held great satisfaction for us. The Garou paid for their assaults against us in those times, and if others paid as well, that is a price we were willing to pay. What's that? No, kid, we didn't create the Inquisition, but we took full advantage of it. Many of the priests were less-than-celibate, and others were easily convinced to look for the wrong signs to find a person guilty. Manipulating the fanatics of the Inquisition and the Church was child's play.

That's the case in most of the situations where we have had an impact on the humans' world. We found a tool that was already there, and used it to the best of our abilities, which is often an amazingly simple task.

And that, spiderlings, is what we do to make our way in this world. It's best not to create a situation when you can use

one that already exists to your advantage. The folks who develop new technologies are the ones who get the blame when things go wrong. The ones who create unpleasant situations are reviled for centuries afterwards. We prefer to work behind the scenes, to influence the ways in which the events unfold rather than to create the events themselves. The vampires and Garou have yet to learn this lesson, for which we should all be grateful. Well, okay, the vampires are actually getting pretty good at it, some of 'em anyway.

Do you *really* understand how easy the manipulation of events is? Most of you do, I suspect, but just in case, I'll give you one more example: The stock market. Most of us dabble in the trades of the humans. It's a good way to make money, which in turn is a powerful tool. But the trading game's only a diversion, a place to study probabilities and learn the worst aspects of human nature. Greed is the primary motivator on Wall Street, but it's also a tool that has many advantages. Why fight an opponent when the right words can cause more harm? Only a few of us are in the sort of position where a phrase or a whispered implication of doom for a certain company can make a change that's radical, but those few who are there have influence that is just plain scary when you look at it. The right words can bring a company to its financial knees, or elevate the value of the corporate stock to levels that have stunned the best of the Wall Street analysts. Most of the time the situation doesn't require action, but when one of the most influential people on Wall Street talks, everyone listens. When three or four of the most respected figures in the industry agree on something, everyone listens.

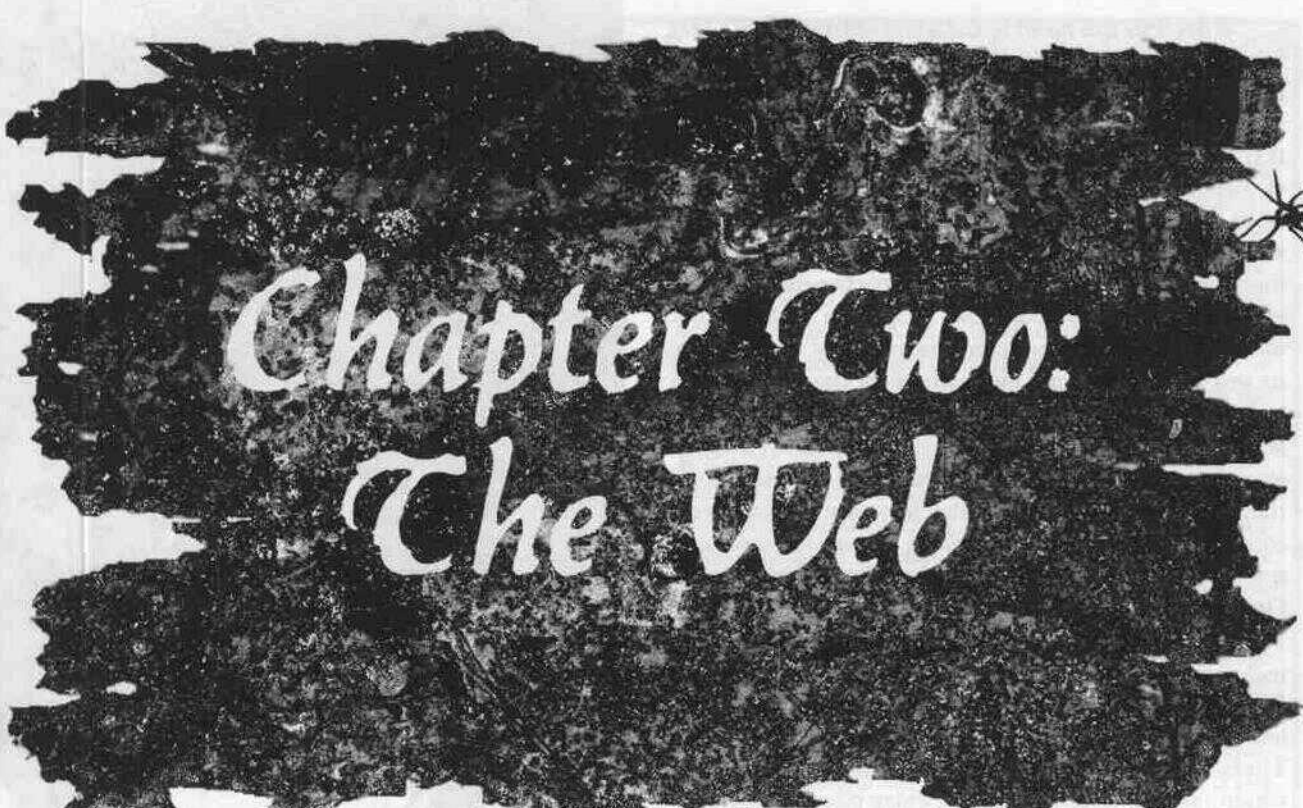
We don't fight the war for dominance in ways that are familiar to most of the Ovid. They respect physical prowess and savagery. Only a few of them understand the subtleties of politics and economy, and even those who do seldom comprehend the fine art of manipulation. The Garou and their ilk use force to make their point known, even within their own ranks. Among the Damhàn, fistfights and guns are a last resort. Politics and power are just threads in the Web, and if those threads are sometimes as deadly as a garrote, then we're able to use them like a really fine surgeon removing a cancer from the deepest parts of a human's body. We don't tear the flesh when we can make a simple, precise cut that is far more effective. That's one of our strengths. We don't suffer from the maddening rage of the Garou, and we ain't nearly stupid enough to think that physical efficiency is the best way to handle the appointment of our leaders.

The world is a web of conflicts and innuendo, a tapestry of deceit and manipulation. We're the weavers of that cloth. There are others who try their luck with the tools we use, but most are amateurs. Most cannot understand the pattern laid out on the skein of life, and their ignorance is just another tool in our arsenal of weapons.

Never allow yourself to think that we're the only ones who use subtlety, but know this: we're masters in a world full of fledglings and apprentices.







Chapter Two: The Web

Have you ever heard of insect politics? Neither have I. Insects don't have politics. They're very brutal. No compassion, no compromise...we can't trust the insect. I'd like to become the first insect politician.

— Jeff Goldblum, *The Fly*

The disciples were given time to absorb what they'd learned. They spoke among themselves for a day, carefully ignoring the pitiful creature who still cackled in their midst. Though the teachers were present, they did not speak to their young progeny. Instead they listened, learning about the new Ananasi and watching them interact with each other.

Some fought each other with words, and others merely studied their brethren and the caverns in which they all waited. Others practiced shifting their shapes, learning what they could of the changes that had taken place in their bodies. A few, those who were the most emotional or who simply wanted to see what they could accomplish, fought among each other with fists, fangs and occasionally weapons. The only rule enforced was that they could not kill each other. The nine instructors simply watched the fights, observing their students. When one tried to win victory over his opponent by lethal means, he was torn asunder, his remains left where they fell as a reminder to the rest—though one of the instructors took care to push the body around for a bit, just to make certain it was properly deceased. If any had previously felt they could break the rules, the nine instructors had remedied their notions with that decisive action.

For three days and nights the teachers and their students relaxed and learned about each other. Then, on the fourth day, the instructions began anew. The first to speak was a wizened old woman with

short white hair and an expression on her face that could freeze scalding water. None dared even fidget when she spoke.

You have learned of the past. Now is the time to learn of the present. The world is not what it once was, not by a long stretch. The world has changed more than most people ever realize, and the changes are continuing.

The Weaver grows stronger every day, eating the chaos of life and spewing forth the webs of order and discipline to a terrifying degree. We love order, for we were created by the Daughter of Weaver, but we were never meant to thrive in a world where order has consumed everything else. For that reason, we will work against Weaver as we once worked for her. She has grown too strong and too demanding. She must be put back in her place. The Wyrms are constantly growing madder, but in a way that has a certain pattern. That pattern is a mystery that we are still unweaving, and when the time is right, we will erase the Wyrms' madness. But not just yet. The Wyrms are far too strong and far too deadly to confront when the time isn't yet right. Lastly, there is the Wyld. Wyld is dying, crushed by the weight of the Great Web and pinned beneath the bulk of the Wyrms' twisted desires. This too will change. The Wyld cannot die, not truly, but the notion of a world where random chaos can't make the necessary changes is not one we find appealing.

What does this mean to the world at large? That's very simple. Technology is increasing in leaps and bounds, growing faster than most people imagined would ever be possible. Science fiction has become science fact. But there's a flaw that's manifested in this more orderly society: the human element has been left out of the equation. What do I mean when I say human element? Well, child, that too is easy. The world is suffering because the very virtues humans claim as their own are overlooked in the process of changing the world and making a better tomorrow. People are numbers, not individuals. Forests are inconveniences that must be destroyed in order to build more offices for the humans who make the world a better place. Charity and kindness have become obstacles in the path of making a profit. There are exceptions, to be sure, but they *shouldn't* be the exceptions, they should be the rule. If these simple human emotions were considered by the humans who claim they are the dominant species on the planet, Wyrn would not be as powerful, and Grandmother Spider would not have sway over everything.

Don't misunderstand me. I care nothing about the technology that is sweeping the world. All the better, I say. But these changes are driven by the forces that created the universe, and these forces are out of control and imbalanced. *The better cars still produce gross amounts of poisons, the air conditioners that cool the places where people could once have never survived with ease are destroying the atmosphere, and the removal of the trees is causing repercussions we're only beginning to understand.*

In seizing so much of the world, the Weaver is destroying that which is most important: symmetry. Without symmetry, we are lost. The wheel can't run smoothly along the road if half of it is flat and the other half over inflated. The building cannot stand if the foundation is uneven, and the world cannot continue to exist if the symmetry between the members of the Triat is not reestablished. That is simple fact.

What's that? No, spiderling, we will not discuss the examples of what is wrong and why just yet. We will, instead, discuss ourselves and what we are doing to repair this colossal error.

We will discuss the world in the simplest of terms, waiting to explain the details later. To explain them now would be to leave you in the dark about too many important facts. Mostly, however, we will discuss what the Ananasi are, and how we work together even in times of civil war. Now enough questions. Wait until I'm finished, or meet the fate of your brother with the bad temper.

The Triumvirate

You have before you this day nine teachers. We are all Ananasi, but we are also all different. We follow different ways of living and serving the Mother-Queen. None of these is wrong, for that is what Ananasa demands. We are following the pattern that she is weaving, and we have no hope of fully understanding the tapestry she creates. The scale is too large, the picture too vast for our comprehension. But someday all will be revealed to us, for she has promised us the answers in the fullness of time.



The Metamorphosis Explained

Unlike the First Change for most of the Ovid, the Metamorphosis is usually a slow process. Long before any physical changes occur, the fledgling Ananasi begins to change emotionally, losing many of the traits that have marked the person who undergoes the transformation. The first noticeable difference is a marked increase in curiosity. Even the worst cases of Attention Deficit Disorder suddenly start noticing details that were almost always overlooked before, because details show a portion of the Pattern. Where many teenagers go through strong and often violent outbursts while suffering through the throes of puberty, the Ananasi starts withdrawing more. This has nothing to do with a need to be alone, but rather is a side effect of constantly watching other people. Observation takes the place of conversation. It becomes more interesting to see how others react to a situation than to react in person.

Other people often consider Ananasi cold, and that is perhaps the truth. Emotions which were once like bright, vivid colors, become muted. The average Damhan becomes less attached to the people in his life, knowing them and perhaps even still caring for them, but only in a vague way. The process is gradual, and it normally takes around two weeks for the young human teenager to become completely detached from any emotional dependency on others. Not surprisingly, a good percentage of parents get the idea that the teen is "having emotional problems," or "getting into the drug scene." It isn't unusual for the parents to send their child for professional help, or even to have her institutionalized for her own benefit during this time. This seldom lasts for long, however, because the child isn't actually suffering from mental or emotional problems, but rather is becoming more rational.

Contrary to what most of the Changing Breeds like to believe, the Ananasi do not suddenly develop a passion for dark clothes and depressing music. Very few of the werespiders ever get into the Goth look or subculture. Most dress exactly as they always have and, aside from being more introverted than before, continue on with their regular existence for several weeks after the Metamorphosis has begun.

Stage two of the transformation is the start of the physical changes. Most Ananasi who come from human stock first notice the changes in their body when they're resting, or when they are eating. Foods that might have been favorites a month earlier start losing their appeal, and the desire to eat for satisfaction is lessened. Well-known binge eaters often start losing weight, simply because the foods they've used as a crutch are no longer as appetizing.

We follow Ananasa, but we do so in the way that she requests. For that reason we also follow the Weaver, the Wyrn and the Wyld. What you must understand above everything else, however, is that the Triat is secondary in this. We do not answer to the Triat; we simply emulate their actions and do what they should have been doing all along.

Additionally, there's the problem of "muscle twitches." The changes that take place within the Ananasi are often uncomfortable at best. As the process is gradual, it's normally seen as nothing more than a cramp or two, or involuntary muscle spasms at first. It's only later that the full realization comes around. Sometimes the physical manifestation of the Metamorphosis is small, a hand or arm that suddenly grows unusual swellings that move under the skin; sometimes it's blatant, like having a few extra limbs and eyes pop out of the body. Either way, the Ananasi normally see this with the same detachment they do everything else: it's something to be studied, not something to fear. Most of the new Ananasi simply concentrate and make the new changes go away, or practice making them change shape and size. In a few days or even hours, the Ananasi will discover all of her forms through trial and error. Instinct tells her not to share this new knowledge with others.

The last stage of the Metamorphosis is simply called the Hunger. Werespiders do not need blood to survive, but the first time they smell it or see it, they know they want it as surely as a drowning man wants air. Once again, however, emotional detachment normally saves them from doing anything too rash. At first they might try tasting their own blood, but it no longer has the proper composition: Ananasi might look human, but they aren't human any more. The composition of their blood, unlike that of most Ovid, simply isn't right. The next step might be as simple as drinking the blood from a raw steak, or finding and killing a small animal. In rare cases, the first blood tasted might even belong to a family member, but it seldom goes further than that initially.

Warm mammalian blood is not an addiction, it is a necessity. It might be taken by force, it might be given freely, but without it, the Ananasi cannot do their part in the battles they must fight.

By the time the Hunger strikes an Ananasi, they are emotionally detached enough that the idea barely fazes them. It's a simple act that must be done; there is no guilt or regret for whatever might happen — at least in most cases. The Hatar are the exception. With the Hatar, the Metamorphosis hits all at once, the transformation and Hunger striking before their emotional tides have been suppressed. This is an unfortunate side effect of being chosen to work for the Wyrn, which normally leads to some rather interesting personality quirks. Though the Hatar also have reduced emotional responses, they develop after the damage to their psyche has been done.

We are substitutes for the beings that have created this universe and abandoned it in their petty squabbles. They no longer do what they are supposed to do, they fight and use this world and the very universe as their weapons. Someone must then take their place and do the work that they ignore. For the time being, Ananasa has chosen us for this task.



They are the Triat: Weaver, Wyrn and Wyld.

We are the Triumvirate: Tenere, Hatar and Kumoti.

There is a difference. Never believe otherwise.

Now, because symmetry must always be maintained, there are three factions under each cabal of the Triumvirate. They are as follows:

Under each aspect of the Triumvirate there are three subclasses; the Myrmidon — the warriors; the Viskr — who can be called wizards for lack of a better term and the Wyrsta — who embrace the more negative aspects of the Triat member they reflect.

Each personifies a different function of the Triat. The Myrmidon are the positive, those who endorse and support the belief of their aspect. The Viskr are the followers who remain most objective, often reinterpreting the philosophies of their aspect, studying the Ways of Weaver, Wyrn or Wyld and trying to fathom that which was never meant to be fully understood. They are the most inquisitive by nature. Lastly are the Wyrsta, who find the flaws in the beliefs of their aspect and do all they can to remedy them. Each of these separate functions is called by a proper name, a title you should know and remember, for it could mean the difference between life and death in some circumstances.

Under the Tenere, there are the Secean, the Plicare and the Gaderin.

Under the Hatar there are the Agere, Anomia and the Malum.

Under the Kumoti there are the Kar, the Amari Aliquid and the Chymos.

The Secean, the Agere and the Kar are all Warriors, but they have little in common beyond that. Saying that they have use for swords above all else is a certain lie. Each serves Ananasa by serving the aspect she chooses for them. Each fights in a different way.

The Plicare, the Anomia and the Amari Aliquid are all the Balancers of the Triat, but they also lack much by way of commonality. Each seeks symmetry, but with methods that are as varied as the snowflakes.

The Gaderin, the Malum and the Chymos are all the Questioners of the Way, but there is little else they share in their beliefs. Each is a gatherer of facts, an interpreter of data and opinion, but the ways in which they react to that information are often diametrically opposed.

There are no tribes of Ananasi. There are no races to separate us. We are not human, though we might be born of them. We are not spiders, though we might have started our lives crawling on eight legs. There is simply the Damhàn.

What then is the difference? Politics. We are beasts of a very political nature, and we follow dictates established for us by our Mother-Queen. Some of you scoff at this. Is it any less possible than the notion that the stars can influence our lives, or the idea that the moon being in the proper place can alter our fortunes? Or any more preposterous than the idea of an arachnid mating successfully with an ape? Yes, I

thought that might get your attention. I shall use simple terms, the better to allow you comprehend my words.

DNA, the building block of all life, is also responsible for how we act and what we are. We are preprogrammed to follow certain ways of life. What we do with those programs is entirely up to each of us individually, but make no mistake about the reality of their existence. These genetic chains dictate our perceptions of the world around us as surely as they do the color of our eyes or how straight our hair might be. But it's more than that. These programs are a part of how our spirits work and function. From time to time you might have need of a new body — no questions, that discussion comes later — and even if you become someone completely different, these perceptions remain forever.

Still the questions come. What about environment? That might make a difference before the first transformation, but after that, it's of no consequence. Your parents beat you? Think hard about this: Do you care anymore? Your parents loved you? Does it matter to you now that you have been changed? I thought not. These variables are not a part of the equation. Ananasa created us to be stronger than unexpected circumstances of birth. That is one of the reasons for the lack of emotions we experience. The past remains the past, and the time before the Metamorphosis is not a thing we need fear. The changes we experience are not merely physical, because Ananasa needs us to be strong, stronger than the scars that so often leave the humans crippled or deranged. Just as our bodies are changed by the Metamorphosis, our minds are reshaped, made clearer and better.

So why should Ananasa take our emotions away? Because the human creature is often consumed by weaknesses. Guilt is a weakness; anger and lust are weaknesses. We might occasionally suffer minor pangs of these emotions, but they aren't as overwhelming as they were before the Metamorphosis. Compassion is a weakness. Allow me to give you an example: if you find that to accomplish your goals you must kill a family of four, you might not hesitate to kill the parents, you might not even think twice about killing the older child, but looking upon the infant, you might decide to hesitate out of a sense of compassion or guilt. That hesitation can be fatal — *will be fatal*, if you have remorse for your actions. Feelings of sympathy and "human kindness" are luxuries we cannot afford. We have a mission to accomplish, regardless of what we might want to think or feel.

I heard some of you earlier, wondering out loud why you should follow the requests of the Mother-Queen. Oh, don't look so shocked. We're your instructors because we are exceptional at listening as well as instructing. Questions aren't punishable by death; you're supposed to ask questions. If you didn't, you wouldn't be Ananasi.

The answer is very simple when you pass the intellectual side of the discussion: You obey the Mother-Queen because it is tradition, because all Damhàn must, and because failure to do so could incur the wrath of Ananasa. This is not an idle worry. Ananasa has made clear that failing to do your best for her is a bad idea. There are punishments for not caring properly. They are... unpleasant.

ant. Ananasa has limited access to the Gaia-Realm, what we call the Earth, but she does have access, and she does take her duties at least as seriously as we do.

Have I ever seen the results of betraying Ananasa? Yes, child, I have. Your body, as I'm sure you've already discovered, can break into hundreds or even thousands of separate parts. Each part is a living being, capable of functioning separately if they must. Ananasa can control those parts if she feels the need. She can destroy them, or she can make them do her bidding. She can make you die slowly, or she can make you wish for a punishment that mild. Do you understand? We are safe from Ananasa's wrath for as long as we do what she requests of us. Failure to obey is a certain guarantee of pain beyond comprehension. The one time I saw Ananasa take punishment on a reluctant Ananasi, the screams lasted for months. She is our mother, and she loves us, but hers is a tough love, to be kind. She is not known for tolerating disobedience or failure. Do not disappoint the Mother-Queen.

The Modern Web: In the Cities

Today, we do not have to worry about the fate of man, who ranks as the dominant species, or the change of landscape. Instead, we are in a situation where the landscape is extending beyond this realm for mortals, reaching into the unknown of cyberspace and pretending to understand all that they encounter. Let's not rush into the outer world. First, we will discuss the places where the Ananasi live, and how we must act to maintain our secrets.

The Children of Ananasa live in every corner of the globe — save Antarctica for the reasons that have already been explained. This is fairly common knowledge, but what is not as well understood is our current social structure and the numbers that we maintain.

The Ananasi live in both cities and the wild. The attitude of the individual sets the stage for where they choose to dwell, but neither of them serves a more important role than the other. All of the Children are equal in the eyes of The Great Mother, and all will do her will in their lives — such is our fate and design. No matter which place you may find yourself, you must establish your home and domain, called the Sylie.

In the city, the Sylie is easy to find, but difficult to establish, and even more of a challenge to maintain. Like all living creatures, you need shelter. Choose a home, an apartment, even the back of an alley if you find this more to your liking, but you must first find the place that you will claim as your own domain. Each location must be the one that speaks to you, for once you have established yourself, that place shall become the center of your life. Like all things, you will need to use patience. Do not leap straight into the first place that you find, because the most obvious location for you will also be the most obvious location for your foes.

Once you have chosen the location, you will have to make it your own, both for your eyes and for the eyes of those

that you wish to join you. You are the only one that can decide what will make your Sylie appealing to you, but remember to honor those that came before you, and your Queen, Ananasa, in all things. If you forget these things you threaten to bring her wrath down upon you, which all other Ananasi are sure to remember throughout time. The Sylie is your protection from your enemies, and your haven from the world. It is your sanctuary from the human weakness and form, and where you may commune with our most gracious Queen. It is also a place to draw in your prey by your design.

When you create your Sylie, you are also extending your life. You do this through two means: by drawing in your prey, and by using it as the next strand of Ananasa's Web. Feeding in this modern world is a difficult matter. In olden days we fed when we were hungry, taking those that were foolish enough to draw near to our nest; the humans rarely hunted us to our Sylie, choosing instead to discover us in the wild when we were more vulnerable. Today, that fear has disappeared. We are hunted everywhere that we are discovered, which makes your selection of prey imperative to your future.

There is no right or wrong prey, only foolish decisions made in choosing prey. In each part of the world there are

The Sylie

What exactly is the Sylie? It's a mishmash of important things to the Ananasi. It's the haven each one of them makes, a place of safety and contemplation. It's their connection to the Umbra, from which they can gather Gnosis. Most important of all, however, it's a connection point to the will of Ananasa.

When Ananasa communicates to her children, she does so while they are in the Sylie more often than not. The Sylie is almost like an amplifier, allowing the Mother-Queen to speak to her Damhàn with far less effort. Despite her great powers — and they are great — she is still a prisoner in Malfeas. The Sylie boosts her power, magnifying the signal, as it were, and allowing her to speak to her children with a minimal use of her energies.

There is no place more sacred to an Ananasi than the Sylie. It is one part church, one part haven and one part comfort zone. The Sylie is also very seldom anything that anyone could ever recognize as something special. It can't be seen or detected from the Gaia Realm, and it appears as to be merely another part of the Great Web from the Umbra. It is perfectly camouflaged, and that's exactly the way Ananasa wants it. It can still be found, still be entered by the most determined hunters, but it's a very difficult task to accomplish.

Though they are extremely defensive of their Sylies, the Ananasi can and sometimes do abandon them at a moment's notice. Sylies can be rebuilt, though it takes time and effort to do so. However, you can bet that anyone who forces a werespider to abandon her Sylie has made an enemy for life.

those who will not be missed. There are people that have no connections to the world. These loners are the ideal prey for you, as they have no line left to follow. You will not always be able to choose them as your exclusive prey, so study your world, and the city that you have chosen, and set your trap.

The most important thing that you need to remember is that you do not always need to destroy your prey entirely to feed. It is best to keep them alive, and returning to your Sylie of their own will. Use your wiles, and your skills to draw them in, and keep them returning for the promise of more; in any case, you must always keep them under your control, through fear or other means, lest you are discovered and destroyed. The less they know the more powerful your control. You must trap them into your domain, taking control of their lives through subtle means. Ours is not a way of power, but a way of delicate design.

Once you have established your Sylie, you must then weave it into the Great Web. All Ananasi know the Rite of Building, and it is through this rite that you add your design to all that has come before. The invisible strands that bind together all of our kind come together in this ritual, bringing you into direct contact with the three closest of our kind. Once in the heart of your Sylie, you can then commune with them and in this way the information that keeps our kind together is shared without the risk of shackling yourself to the ways of man. It doesn't matter if the nearest to you is closest friend or most dire enemy, if the information benefits the will of Ananasa, then it shall be spread; do hesitate to inform your enemies of little matters, though, as the Ananasi have long had a tendency to war amongst themselves.

The other strength that comes from your Sylie is the link to Ananasa herself. Many of the Changing Breeds will find themselves connected to their gods — or “totems,” by their terms — through indirect means. Sometimes a spirit will come to them with a message from their gods, while other messages are seen through obscure symbology. This might be fine for them, but it is a very inefficient and confusing method for following the designs of the Mother-Queen. Instead, in your Sylie you will get messages directly from Ananasa herself. You may not commune with her, but she will commune with you. Should you have any information that she wants directly, you might even be granted the gift of speaking so that she might hear you. Never presume that your knowledge is greater than hers, and never doubt the information that she gives you; if you have been blessed with a message it is for a sound reason, and give it the proper attention.

Living in the city also leads to the problem of secrecy. There are many enemies in the city — which we will discuss later — and they must be avoided to preserve not only your life, but also the number of our kind that truly inhabit the world. The easiest thing to do is avoid your enemies. Keep to the goals that Ananasa has set for you, staying away from all that are unnecessary. If your tasks include dealing with others not of our kind, then there are some things to remember, the first of which is simple: they are not like us. The others, whether of the Ovid or vampire, warlock or other, they are not Children of Ananasa, and they do not understand our ways. Most of them fear us, and tend to think of us as creatures of destruction rather than the builders that we truly are. Patience, the key to all our actions, is

the first step to be taken. Do not act out of place, and do not try to enforce the proper way of things upon these lesser creatures; your actions would be misinterpreted, and you would end up falling to their own brief vengeance. We learned this rule during the First War of Rage and we must never forget the lesson. Work inside the rules they have established for their realm; be as one of them, but never forget that you are a different creature, and a servant of Ananasa herself. It is easiest to deal with the other Changing Breeds, as they have dealt with us in the past. Hide your anger at past indiscretions! You will gain nothing by letting the past influence the present; let the future be the ultimate retribution. With simple discipline, you can interact with the other Changers; do not let their arrogance disturb you.

Dealing with vampires and other unnaturals is another matter. They do not understand our kind, and will show open contempt for us and our actions. Yet, if you have to interact with them, you must take severe precautions. One tack that is sometimes useful is to disguise yourself as one of them. The vampires have much in common with us from both a physical and an intellectual viewpoint. They must keep their identities a secret, and they, too, find themselves needing the blood of humans to gain power in their world. If you work inside their society, obeying their rules, you will find that they do not question you as much as you would question them; they are foolish creatures, and are prone to believe that their society is impervious to infiltration.

None of these creatures really understands the numbers that we truly possess. They see us as solitary creatures, unlinked and uninformed. We are “scary little monsters” that continue to wile away our time in efforts of minute scale, waiting for the words of our Great Mother before we can act. We act by the will of Ananasa, and through her guidance we will achieve much. As to the matter of our numbers, there are none of the Changing Breeds save the Garou that can match us in number; we do not flaunt our numbers, nor do we understand the need to brag of such matters. Secrecy is something to value, and an important weapon in our arsenal.

Life in the Wilds

Life away from the city is similar, at least in the sense that once you have established your Sylie, you must then join it to the Great Web, and you will find that you are in contact with the Mother-Queen. The biggest difference comes in the form of prey, and the concept of secrecy.

The outdoor crawlers have more freedom to choose their homes. A simple human abode or a more complicated arachnid construct: both serve their role with equal efficiency. The luxury comes with the fact that, the further that you choose to live away from human society, the more freedom you have in lifestyle and shape of life. In case the latter of that statement confuses you, let me explain. You are trapped in one form around humans, for simple fear of your life. In the depths of the wilds, you can assume the form that you find most pleasing. You may hunt as you were intended to do, trapping prey in carefully placed snares, and feeding on them as your hunger desires.



The difficulty in living outside the paths of man is that you lose the benefits of feeding on them. Humans make excellent pawns, and have many uses aside from the occasional need for companionship. They are energetic, chaotic and as capable of following any aspect of the Triat as we are. Most importantly, they are the dominant species on the planet, and we often have need of their tools in our actions. While that is somewhat limiting, you benefit from the freedom to assume the form that you choose. There are many city dwellers that would gladly change the blood of humans for the freedom to crawl about as they choose.

Despite the freedom, you must still maintain a level of secrecy that keeps us from being discovered. Should a human wander into your domain, think before you act. You must show the patience of Ananasa, and decide the fate of this human with delicate care. To draw a hunt into the woods would draw undo attention to yourself, and this would only arouse suspicion and place you in harm's way. Do not destroy all that you have built for a brief moment of visceral pleasure.

The Politics of War

Under the fragrant bait you will find the hooked fish.

— Paul Gross, *Due South*

Ananasa makes demands and we obey. That's the way it is. What that means is that when this little teaching session is over you will all go your separate ways, and you will do your sacred duties. They are often not the sort of things you would ever imagine yourself doing, but they are important nonetheless.

Damhàn must fight many enemies, and only a small number of them are human. Here I must clarify a few things for you. When I say we must fight, I do not mean we must stalk, attack and physically defeat our enemies. I mean we must know our enemies, we must understand their ways, and we must exploit them to our advantage. We are called the Patient Ones, not the Bloodthirsty Savage Ones, though there is a fair share of blood in all of our lives.

Consider the following: The Great Web is the culmination of all things, both physical and spiritual. It is, simply put, the whole of the universe. Now, understanding this, realize that all things have their place in the Great Web. The catch is that most of the creatures in the universe don't truly understand what their place is, and that is why we are here.

In a perfect world, the players would all know and understand their place. We would be allowed to simply follow our own goals, rather than having to manage the entire thing. As this is an imperfect world, we must do more than our share.

What's that? Why can't we simply explain the truth to those who have strayed from their duties? Because they wouldn't care. They don't want to know the truth, and they most especially don't want to learn it from us. We are a burden they are perfectly content to live without. We cannot be their teachers if they do not want to learn, and we cannot help them if they do not want our help. Therefore we do what we must to make certain that the Great Web maintains its symmetry. It's a monumental task, one that we are designed to handle, but one that still takes enormous effort. The humans, the Ovid

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and the others have no desire to understand the Great Web. They're all too busy trying to make it work for them in the ways they wish. Virtually every creature in existence wants to make the universe serve his or her goals; even we are guilty of this. The difference is that our goals are not dictated by us, they are given to us by Ananasa. What we as individuals might desire is secondary. That makes us a bit different from the rest.

Oh, the others might pay lip service to the ideals of their gods, but they seldom follow them with the dedication we show. If the Garou actually listened to the Wyld and Gaia, the Wyrms would not be as powerful as it is today. They're far too busy trying to decide who's doing things the right way to actually perform their tasks properly. They hold glory and honor as special icons, personal goals that must be achieved in an effort to assure themselves some modicum of immortality in their own legends. The result is chaos as great as that the Wyld creates. Chaos unchecked is a bad thing, a fact that the werewolves still haven't figured out. With most of the other Ovid, they've been hurt too severely by the Wars of Rage to be effective. The Garou destroyed the Great Web's symmetry while inadvertently working for the very foe they claim they want destroyed. Fools that they are, few of them realize the truth of that statement. If they did we wouldn't have to work quietly. Even in this, the damned wolves have hindered us.

But there is no choice in this matter. If we worked openly, the Garou would once again decide we'd become more than we should, and do everything they could to "put us in our place." We cannot afford the time it would take to obliterate them properly. They are a nuisance that must be tolerated. For now.

Now, back to the main subject of my little speech. We fight in the same way that spiders fight. We hunt when we must, and we manipulate whenever possible. Manipulation is more fruitful, and takes less effort. It is, in short, efficient. Why would we willingly fight a foe to the death when we could instead make that foe accomplish our goals for us? The Great Web is here, ready for us to employ and reweave; the rub is knowing which strands to pull and which to simply remove. Fortunately, we were designed to understand the patterns of the Web. It is second nature to us.

To that end, we remain secretive. It's far harder to use a pawn properly when the pawn is aware of who is behind its actions. Better to let the pawn feel it moves of its own free will.

Allow me to give you a simple example. Let's say there is a man in office, who we feel should be discredited, to assure that he not have the chance to gain even more power. This man might be a president of a nation, popular with the masses, and manipulative in his own right. How would we go about removing him from power? Well, we could simply arrange for his death, but that often brings about a counterproductive sympathy for the man and his ideals. Though the actual man is eliminated, many others, who feel they could honor his memory by continuing his crusade, then pick up his goals. Where there was only one to eliminate before, there are now dozens or even hundreds. It's a ploy that doesn't always achieve the desired effect. So instead, we arrange for his embarrassment. His ideals might be for the best, but most every individual has weaknesses. The catch is knowing how to exploit them. Find his vice, feed that vice and then arrange for him to be found out in a public manner. True,

he is still in power in most cases, but by the time you're done, that power is severely weakened. Many of his supporters suddenly find the idea of working for or with that man not only embarrassing, but also potentially destructive to their own agendas. How can anyone align themselves with someone they now know is victim to his own uncontrolled lusts? More often than not, the end result is a loss of favor not only for the individual, but also for the ideals he held as important. In a few cases there might be sympathy for such a fool, but not often. Especially not if that vice goes against the moral fabric of the nation in which the leader has been caught with his pants down. Oh, the nation might not see what he did as wrong, but they will act as if what he did was a sin, because it's expected of them.

Did I have anyone in particular in mind when I made that example? Well, let's just leave it as an example. The less known, the less chance that the details could be revealed as manipulation. That is the final reason for secrecy, children. Once a scheme is discovered, once humans or others can see the strands of the Great Web that have been tweaked to accomplish a goal, you risk them seeing your mark on other strands of the Web and following those changes back to you. Manipulating others is delicate work. Discovery can lead to not only revealing the truth behind one action, but behind many others as well. Just as with a house of cards, should one of your careful alterations be discovered and removed, the rest might fall into shreds around you, leaving you vulnerable and exposed. Once discovered you might well find that all you have achieved is quickly uncovered and destroyed. We are builders, very little bothers us more than having our machinations ruined. The destruction of our webs means the destruction of a fraction of the Great Web, and that in turn adds to the loss of symmetry that we are already working to repair. Don't make matters worse for yourself and for your brethren by being boastful or sloppy. Ananasa and Ananasi alike frown on stupidity. You cannot make worse enemies than the Mother-Queen and her children.

Walking On Our Webs: The Friends and Enemies of Ananasa



To discuss the relations that we have with the others of this world, it becomes a bit of a misnomer to classify them as friends and enemies. The Ananasi do not have friends or enemies. The others that we deal with can be beneficial to our cause, or they can hinder our efforts. We do not judge them, we just deal with them accordingly. We have classified several beings by their tendencies in relationship to our actions, which can only be used as a guideline. You must observe all beings by their actions. There is, of course, an exception to this rule. One of our most dangerous enemies comes from within.

The Padrone

There is much debate over the origin and transmission of what the Elder Crawlers have come to call the Padrone.



The things that are agreed upon are the facts that it is spread like a disease — though through unknown means — and that it changes our relationship with the Wyrn.

The Padrone enter our tales shortly after the War of Rage. Our kind and the rest of the Changing Breeds were at our weakest, brought down by the raging Garou. We had sulked back to our caves and hidden dens, hiding from the wolves that had so viciously turned upon us. Our Sylies had turned into our safest havens, taking us from the world and giving us access to the wisdom of Ananasa; but we cannot force wisdom from Ananasa, and our confusion left us vulnerable to outside influence. That is when they came into our homes.

The legends tell of Ananasi dying in their Sylie without visible sign of trouble or struggle. They entered through unknown means, into our most secret places, and took the life of the Ananasi without explanation or reason. The corpses were left desiccated, empty of the ichor that kept them alive and cast aside as so much rubbish. We only knew of one creature that was capable of such an action.

The Padrone are the Ananasi. They are the Children of Ananasa turned against themselves. Not in the simple matter of warring through ideology, but hunting us down in our own personal havens. The Ananasi have four forms that most attain: Homid, Pithus, Lilian, and Crawlerling. Perhaps the Padrone is the fifth form of an Ananasi, and one that has but one goal, destroying others of their kind.

The Padrone form most closely resembles the Pithus — that of a large spider on the prowl — but horribly mutated to a terrible new shape. The Padrone has the eight legs of a spider, along with two vestigial legs that it uses to disorient its prey and keep it at a distance. The Padrone are not limited to that one form, but they assume this form once they have lured their prey to their doom. The speed of this form is astonishing, much quicker than any normal Ananasi.

It is believed that the Padrone need the essence of the Ananasi to keep themselves alive, much in the same way that we need the essence of others. The Padrone have a strange sense that draws them to a Sylie, letting them discover the most carefully hidden refuge no matter where it might be located. Once they have found the Sylie, they gain access using any number of means. It is almost as though they understand their foe and are able to use their weakest point to gain access; whether through force or deceit, they are able to feed upon their prey in their own home. Once in the lair, they assume the Padrone form and attack, rendering the Ananasi powerless.

There are many of the wise crawlers who insist that this is nothing more than spiritual corruption taken to the highest level — that these creatures have fallen to the Destroyer and have become an agent of annihilation. Others insist that this cannot be the truth, as our kind already has links to the Wyrn, and the balance of the Weaver and the Wyld prevent this decay. Others still argue that the corruption would not explain the creation of a new form. There are many that think that this might be the result of a mad mage whose fear of spiders might prove to be disaster for us all. We do not know



the answer, we know only questions. The biggest question is the role that Ananasa will choose for us in this challenge, as she has yet to tell us her opinion of her Children turned killer. We wait, but we are wary of all that come near.

The Changing Breeds

While they count us among their own, there are truly few similarities between the Ananasi and the others that have come to be known collectively as the Changing Breeds. There are many times when we find ourselves coming into contact with these creatures, as they, too, will travel the Umbra and at times deal with Grandmother Spider and even Ananasa herself. Do not assume that they are your friends or your enemies. Listen to the words we grant you here, for we have experience on our side, but never, under any circumstances, assume that any of us has the wisdom of Ananasa. Follow her dictates in all things. Should she tell you to befriend the ones we have just told you are your enemies, do so. Do not question her, for she knows what she is doing.

Bastet

Cats are playful creatures, and seem to lack the discipline to make worthwhile allies. There are times, however, when our mutual desire for solitude can work to the advantage of both, particularly in the deep wild. In the past, they have suffered as much as we have, but they are distressingly irrational and undisciplined. Keep them at arm's length, and never let them get too close.

There are eight, I believe, tribes of Bastet. They tend to fight among themselves as much as we do, but there seems no purpose to their fighting, no reason for their struggles against each other, save to finish the job the Garou started. Like the Garou, they claim to serve the Wyld, but manage to walk the path of the Wyrn too often for their own good.

Corax

If we have a true enemy among the Changing Breeds, it is the Ravens. The birds have long feasted on us, and old racial fears do not die quickly; though ravens themselves rarely view spiders as food, it is the avian nature of the Corax that puts us at odds. They also have no respect for secrecy, seeking to discover and unravel all of the secrets of the world; we have no place for any creature that seeks to spy on us constantly. The Corax are never to be trusted, and barely to be tolerated.

A simple rule to remember: Should you find the birds getting too close to your secrets, distract them. Throw them off balance with trinkets and treasures. They love anything that glitters, gems and precious metals best of all. Barring that, start rumors of juicier secrets and spread them to the ones you know to speak with the damnable avians.

Garou

They are killers and barbarians. Some of them play at civilization, but they are only beginning to understand what

that word means. We do not hold grudges, but we do not forgive past indiscretions. Even in their twilight, they are too numerous to avoid completely, but too violent to associate with on a regular basis. Some of them show signs that they may yet grow beyond their endless aggression. The Children of Gaia have done what they can to bring peace among the tribes, but what they've managed in the millennia since they formed is remarkably little. The Glass Walkers have turned to the Weaver in an effort to suppress their more wild tendencies, but all they've managed to accomplish so far is reaching beyond their limited perceptions into realms of the universe that they simply cannot understand. They seek to unleash new ways of dealing with the Wyrn by seeing with the Weaver's eyes. They fail to understand that the Wyrn is a thrall to the Weaver. By the time they fully comprehend what they are doing, they will likely be as much slaves to Grandmother Spider as the Corrupter is.

Allow me if you will to discuss a little something about each separate tribe of the werewolves. They are politically confused, and need a bit of defining.

Black Furies

The Furies believe in a matriarchal society, and are among those who've spread rumors that we do the same. True, as often as not it is the females among us who lead in the rare occasions when we gather in numbers, but there is no truth to the notion that only the females can take command. The only female guaranteed a position of power over any of us is Ananasa herself. Still, if they want to believe incorrectly that we are their kindred spirits in philosophy, I see no reason to disillusion them.

Black Spiral Dancers

Would you like to see the reasons we do not follow the Triat as the Garou do? Take a look at the wolves who idolize the Wyrn. They are mentally diseased, and as often as not physically blighted as well. They've fallen to the corruptive influences of a cosmic power gone mad. If you feel you can do so, feel free to use them to your advantage. Otherwise, I'd suggest avoiding the Black Spiral Dancers.

Bone Gnawers

The Bone Gnawers are the lowest of the low among the wolves, excluding only the Black Spiral Dancers. Though they are kind to the humans they watch over, generous to a fault and easy to work with, they are treated as dogs and half breeds. Use this to your advantage. Many of them resent the mistreatment, and a nugget or two of information that can raise their esteem in their siblings' eyes goes a long way to winning you a useful pawn in the future. Just the same, they are werewolves, and should not be trusted not to betray you at a moment's notice.

Children of Gaia

Somewhere along the way, a few of the werewolves decided it was time to play nicely. I think it happened just after they'd finished trying to kill all the other Ovid. Perhaps a few of them have an overdeveloped sense of guilt, or maybe they just felt it was the best way to avoid getting torn limb from limb the next time they encountered a survivor or two. In either case, these are the kinder, gentler werewolves. That means they'll



smile and make you feel at home before they try to destroy you. Play nicely with them, leave as quickly as you can. Perhaps a little good PR will come out of the entire sordid affair.

Fianna

The Fianna are warriors, and more often than not, they are capable of remaining honorable. Do not annoy these Garou and then allow them to live, because they'll remember it later. They are best avoided, at least when they've been drinking — which is, as I understand it, most of the time.

Get of Fenris

There are homicidal maniacs, and then there are the Get of Fenris. For some reason they feel it's their sacred duty to beat everything they encounter to a bloody pulp. If they feel you are weak — and they feel most everything is weaker than they are — they will challenge you to combat. Sometimes they play fair and actually make a ceremonial affair of the entire ordeal, in which case you can expect them to do everything they can to kill you slowly. Other times they simply attack, in which case you can expect the violence to be swift and brutal. Do not trust them. Sooner or later, no matter how rough and ready you might behave, they'll decide you've been weak and try to kill you.

Glass Walkers

Some people aren't satisfied if they aren't trying something new. In the case of the Glass Walkers, they've decided the best way to help preserve the wild places in the world is to have some control of where the cities get built. They have walked away from the Wyld and into the lair of the Weaver. They are confused and disoriented by everything around them. More importantly, they are turning to the Weaver for guidance and will likely fall into Grandmother Spider's web before too much more time has passed. They make nice pawns, but understand that they are truly, abysmally stupid before you deal with them. Being as thick as they are means they are dangerous.

Red Talons

The Glass Walkers have stumbled hard into the ways of the Weaver. The Red Talons are taking up their slack with the Wyld. They are irrational, in pain, losing their population at a dangerous pace, and just shy of rabid. Avoid them.

Shadow Lords

One thing remains true of almost every sentient race: sooner or later, someone decides that being subtle is better than being straightforward. That's a lesson we learned ages ago and a lesson the Shadow Lords are still learning. But they are very studious pupils, and closer to true skill at subterfuge than we would like. Never turn your back on a Shadow Lord, and never reveal anything of significance to one of their ilk. They are as trustworthy as an agitated snake.

Silent Striders

It's unusual to find Garou who prefer to walk alone. The Striders are contemplative and wise in their way. Sadly, they are still Garou, and that means they really can't be trusted.

Silver Fangs

The self-proclaimed rulers of the werewolves. The Silver Fangs are the very creatures that decided once upon

a time that all the other Ovid had a few marbles loose, and that, children, is a case of the pot calling the kettle black. They're so inbred and paranoid that they can't even trust their own reflections. Avoid them.

Stargazers

The Stargazers seek the answers to life's enigmas. Sadly, on the few occasions when they have found the answers, they've decided they must have asked the wrong questions. If you must associate with them, speak in riddles. It's the best way to keep them too busy thinking for their claws to become a potential threat.

Uktena

Well, the Uktena have their hearts in the right place, but they are not equipped to handle the tasks they've set before themselves. They would see the Wyrn captured and suppressed, rather than cured and freed. Millennia have passed and they still haven't figured out that they aren't walking the right path to solving their problems. We will not show them the proper course, but we can still hope they manage to find their way in the course of time.

Wendigo

Oh my. It seems the Wendigo have suffered greatly at the hands of their fellow werewolves. They lost a full tribe of their closer kin and then they got their homelands taken from them. Let me put that into perspective for you. They're feeling pissy because they discovered that werewolves can be treacherous, deceitful and overly vindictive tyrants. As a result of getting the smallest taste of what the War of Rage did to the other Changing Breeds, they've become bitter and militant. Good thing for the Garou that the Gurahl and Bastet aren't quite as blatant about their hurt feelings.

Gurahl

These are creatures that are worthy of respect — to a point. They have patience and understanding, something that we can understand, and can be entertaining companions. If you are in the deep wilds, and you find yourself in the company of one of these rare creatures, make the most of your time. Enjoy the experience, and remember the lessons that they will teach. Peaceful creatures can make for pleasant relations, and these are the epitome of peace — unless you anger them. It is nice to know that not all of the Changing Breeds feel the need to kill first and ask questions later. Of course, they also have made quite a name for themselves as creatures that understand the better part of valor. After all, when was the last time that a Gurahl was seen as a threat? Such a waste.

Mokolé

They are eldest of us all. They are primal, raw power, a force of nature that is beauty to behold. We do not associate with them often, but share their time on this world. There is an unspoken respect that we hold for them, though we fear for their future as their lands are disappearing too quickly for them to survive.

The Mokolé hold most of the universe's memories inside them. When they are gone, all will suffer the loss, unless Ananasi's plans come to fruition before then. What is the purpose of existence when the time of childhood is not only

gone but forgotten? Without their recollections, much of the beauty in the world will be ignored, more so than it already is.

Nuwisha

They are light creatures that are close to the Garou, but without the rage that drives them to destruction. These laughing creatures are far more wise than they would like us to think, but they cannot deceive us in this way. We do not trust them, and we will avoid them if we can, and destroy them if we must. Like the Corax, they seek to know all of the secrets we might hold. The difference is, they know how to keep a secret. Should you meet a Nuwisha, be pleasant and be helpful, but never tell them anything you would consider important. Knowledge is power, and just what they might do with true power is anyone's guess.

Ratkin

There are too many creatures that seek to know the secrets of others, and these lowly beasts are beneath it all. We pride ourselves on the strength to our size, but these creatures are pathetic. We cannot imagine having to live off of the waste of others. They are not to be trusted, and they are disgusting to behold. However, they are more numerous than you might imagine. Just as there are spiders everywhere, there are rats. Rats are survivors; they multiply and fester in the dark places beneath the cities. It is just possible that they too understand the power of the Weaver, and that they too fight against Grandmother Spider's insane methods.

Rokea

They are fish. Mammals we understand, but fish are not something that we deal with often. They are older than us, and understand things that we cannot comprehend, but their knowledge is in a different zone of life. You do not need to fear or avoid them, for you will never see them.

The Others

Aside from the Changing Breeds, there are others in this world that may cross your path. It is best to be prepared for what they shall bring to you, and what they will expect from you. Remember still that they are not Ananasi, and therefore are not what you would expect.

Humans

These are still your greatest enemy, and also your greatest ally. There are no other creatures that show such a range of emotion and possibility. Humans are necessary to our lives, and will always be around us while we are on this world. When our goals have been reached, the humans will be here on this world with us, providing what we need to continue our role in the Great Mother's plan.

Mages

They weave magic as though it were their own. They are beautiful to comprehend and terrible to behold, but make for

the best of allies. If you dare to keep them near you, they will create wonders that will take you beyond the limits of this world. Nevertheless, they have the ability to change the world in ways that are drastic and dangerous. They are, for better or worse, unwilling servants of the Weaver. Should the need arise, destroy them, for they are, after all, only human.

Vampires

There are no others that we understand as completely as the vampire. They know the thrill of blood, and the worthiness of patience. They are the perfect disguise and the ultimate tool. What better way to find someone to aid you than to convince someone that you are one of their own? The catch with the vampires is that they seek to be like us in too many ways. They understand the practice of moving pieces across a board, knowing that the smallest pawn can become a valuable ally in the right circumstances. They too are often cold, heartless beings. Do not trust them anymore than you would trust a rabid Garou, but use them to their ultimate extent. Despite their best efforts, most will eventually turn and bite the hands that feed them. It is in their nature to betray one another. So, do not be the one that feeds them; instead show them the food and let them eat for themselves. Like the legendary gods of old, they're known for killing their creators and stealing the strength of their progenitors for themselves. In light of their own cannibalistic methods — not so dissimilar to the ones we sometimes employ — we should be grateful that the vampires cannot feed from our blood. It is too alien for them to ingest.

The Dead

Sometimes the Dead do not rest easily. Often they fail to find peace because of something done to them by the Ovid. Kill only when necessary or you might well discover that the Dead seek you out for revenge. The biggest problem with ghosts is simply that it's very hard to kill a dead man the second time around.

On the other hand, they can often be useful for information. Sometimes the Dead can get to places beyond where even we can see.

The Laws of Ananasa

"The Garou have a set of laws they live by," said the lawyer who had taken over the instructions of the spiderlings. "They call these laws the Litany, and the rules they follow are as ancient as their own people." He smiled thinly at the attentive students. "That means they're still fairly new in the grander scheme of things. What is most interesting about their Litany is that each separate tribe chooses to interpret these laws in a different way. This is most likely a side effect of allowing their totems to dictate too much of how they should execute their duties as the Defenders of Gaia. They should be asking themselves a simple question before they take any actions: They should be asking themselves, 'Is this what Gaia wants of me?'"

He coughed into his hand and reached for the glass of water in front of him, sipped, and continued. "I suspect they might act

differently if they took this simple step. I know the world would be a better place if they did."

"We work by an entirely separate set of rules. We follow the Laws of Ananasa, the Mother-Queen. She has expressed herself very clearly, and she punishes those who break away from her rules, for the benefit of us all. She is a wonderful, loving mother, but Ananasa can be harsh when the need arises..."

The rules are simple enough and my advice about them is even simpler: Obey. Do not pause to reinterpret what Ananasa has commanded. Should she wish to change the rules, that is her place, not yours. Should she suddenly decide that we should all follow the Wyrms and forgo our aspects, that is her desire and we will do it. Know these rules, follow them. They are meant to guide us on the path that Ananasa has chosen for us, her first and favored children.

As I said before, the Laws of Ananasa are simple:

Obey the Mother-Queen in All Things:

Her will is what has taken us this far in our sacred quest to restore the Triat. Her wisdom is what guides us in all matters. Do not feel that you, a mere stripling, have suddenly grown wiser. Do not question her will and do not try to bend her sacred laws to your own desires.

Defend Your Brethren from All Who Would Do Them Harm:

As we have said before, we are all family. We might meet again in the field of combat and destroy each other, but we must never allow others to do so without fearing for their very existence. In this there can be no mercy and no quarter. If another of the Damhàn is attacked while you are present, even one whom you personally hate, you must defend him. Even if the one who attacks him is your chosen mortal mate, you must obey. Failure to do so is met by the harshest of punishments. Do not think death is the worst thing that can happen to you. Rest assured there are far worse fates, and from time to time they've been experienced by our brethren who fell short on this most sacred law.

Follow the Aspect and Faction that Ananasa Chooses for You:

I don't really give a damn if you like to hug trees in your spare time or think surfing the Internet is the coolest thing since the movie *Arachnophobia*. When you are told by Ananasa what aspect and faction you must follow, that's the end of it. If you're meant to follow the way of the Chymos and would rather be hanging around with the Agere, that is an opinion you keep to yourself. Ananasa is wise, and she has a plan that we must carry out if she is ever to be freed and the natural order of the universe is ever to be restored. That means what I want, what you want and what your best friend in the whole world wants is secondary. You are given a sacred task, and you are chosen by Ananasa herself. Don't play games.

Understand the Ways of the Triat, Both as They Were and as They Are. Know the Difference:

I shouldn't have to explain this, but I will. The Triat has gone wrong. Somewhere along the way, they screwed up and threw the universe out of whack. That's where we come in. We have to fix their mistakes. That is what Ananasa wants, and what she will get from us. Am I making myself perfectly clear? If you are Hatar, you will follow the ways of the Wyrms — As the Wyrms were meant to be. You will not make a life of corrupting the world to better suit the Wyrms' needs. You will not use the ways of the Wyrms to twist the world into your own vision of a perfect hell to suit your own selfish needs. You will do what the Wyrms have forgotten to do. If you are Kumoti, you will revel in the ways of the Wyld, you will bring forth chaos and change, as that is your sacred duty. You will not make friends with the Garou and other Ovid, save as is necessary to accomplish the goals of Ananasa and the Wyld. You are a part of an organized deliberate plan created by the Mother-Queen, and, damn it all, you must never forget that. If you are asked by Ananasa to follow the ways of the Tenere, then you will do so. But you must never allow yourself to forget that Grandmother Spider is a raving lunatic with designs on destroying everything. You must never forget that we are working to stop the Weaver from ending all existence. The Weaver is stark raving mad, children. She can't help that, but it's a fact. Do not, under any circumstances, forget that while she is your Grandmother, she is also wrong. She may seem soothing and loving from a distance, but up close, you'll notice that her dentures don't fit and she smells like mothballs. Don't be fooled.

You are not serving the Wyrms, the Wyld and the Weaver. You are taking their place and getting done what they themselves are failing to accomplish. Know them for what they were, for what they are and for what, with Ananasa's guidance, they will be again. Any questions? No? Good!

Know Your Enemies:

Oh, this one's simple. Everyone is your enemy. They might act like friends, but they do not serve the same goal that we do, and that makes them enemies. Do not try to convert them, they will not understand. Do not tell them your personal secrets, they will use them against you. Do not let them seduce you with their false cosmologies and their hopes for a better tomorrow. They are wrong. Seduce them? Certainly. Use them? Absolutely. Unless they are one of the Damhàn, or a minion of Ananasa who actually understands what she wants, they are your enemies. When we meet in the world beyond the sacred places, we will likely be enemies. Don't forget these things. This is the will of Ananasa.

Know the Great Web for What It Is:

The Great Web is the whole of the universe, and all things have their place in it somewhere. What do I mean? I mean that life is sacred, but so is death and so is change. All things exist for

a purpose, but that purpose is not necessarily ours to divine. Understand that what you encounter exists because it was meant to exist. Do not condemn anything you meet without at least trying to understand what purpose it serves. That's the way of the Garou with their foolish War of Rage. They didn't care to learn the reasons for the other Ovid, and now the entire universe pays for their folly. Oh, I can see in your eyes that you are skeptical. How can one little world affect the universe? Well, how can the world affect one life? Everything is connected. Every strand of the Great Web is there for a reason. We must first understand the purpose of a strand before we decide it serves us to alter or remove that strand. Ananasa gives us wisdom in these things. We are... unusually gifted in understanding the Great Web, but we are still only children in comparison to the Triat. Even they, who can bend the forces of Destruction, Chaos and Order to their will, haven't always made the best decisions. That, my friends, is the reason we must live up to the name of "the Patient Ones." Foolish, emotional reactions to the obstacles placed before us by the universe lead to devastating reactions. Do you really want that on your conscience?

Know Your Place:

We have a purpose. We must follow that purpose. We have a creator, we must follow her orders. These are simple rules to live by. But they get more complex. Just as we must understand the Great Web, we must understand that there are others who serve properly in their places. We respect the Mokolé, because they have never fallen from their purpose. We admire the Rokea, for they have never turned from their sacred duty to survive at all costs.

Keep Your Mouth Shut:

Our place is to fix the flaws in the Great Web by serving Ananasa. Understand that, and then forget it. You must never tell others of what we do, because they are not capable of understanding. They believe that all aspects of the Ananasi are at war, that we exist solely to destroy each other. They are right to a degree, but they don't understand what goes on behind that war, or why we continue to do battle against one another. They cannot understand the subtleties of our checks and balances. Hell, knowing the Garou, they'd feel obligated to take over for us, and if that should happen, we will surely all die a pointless death.

Worship None but Ananasa:

Let me emphasize this again. We might do the work of the Triat, but we do not follow their laws and we do not care about their minions. We do what must be done, by order of the Mother-Queen. Follow her orders. Follow her intent. Do not allow yourself to mistake your sacred mission for something other than what it is. Do not follow the "totems" of the other Ovid. They will deceive you, wittingly or not, because they are all associated with the Triat, and as we have already made abundantly clear, the Triat is askew, they lack the symmetry to handle their own tasks and will surely lead you astray. You have your god, obey her, and allow her to guide you, and never, under



any circumstances, allow the false gods of the Ovid to sway you. The punishment for breaking this law is...unpleasant.

Pack Mentality

The lawyer stepped forward again, studying his students once more, his face set into a cold, calculating mask. It was an expression that seemed to come very naturally.

"Most of us prefer to live solitary lives. That's all good and well for the most part. But there are exceptions to almost every rule — I say almost, because the laws of Ananasa do not have exceptions — and there are those of us who want or need to join together for protection or comfort.

"This isn't always a bad idea. Why? Because, like it or not, we aren't the only Ovid out there, and some of them are well known for running in packs. We do not run in packs. We move together in colonies. What is a colony? Well, it's exactly what the name implies, a collection of us working together for a common goal. It's also a wonderful means of expanding our range of influence and protection."

We don't really need each other, not in the sense that we can't get along just fine on our own. We aren't lonely, desolate creatures when we are by ourselves. Even if we are, there are plenty of humans we could use to take care of the loneliness. As you may or may not have noticed, we tend to be fine-looking people. It's a side effect of what we are; we can subtly change ourselves to suit our needs, and it isn't even a conscious thing.

But look back in your old yearbooks when you have a chance. You might notice that that spare tire you've had since birth is gone, that the color of your skin has evened out, that you've got a better shape than you ever had before, or your lips are just a bit fuller, or your breasts are a touch more firm than they were in the past. Sometimes we unconsciously adjust ourselves in this fashion, because we need to. We must be attractive to our prey, or they might not get close enough to trap in our webs. It's one part vanity, one part necessity if you want to be completely honest — yes, I know, not likely — but it's useful for getting and keeping the company we want to have.

So why would we bother with colonies? Well, it's easier to keep up with the latest news for one. We can chat with each other and find out what's what in the stock markets, or who's sleeping with whom at the office of our local politicians. But more importantly, we can't always serve Ananasa to the best of our abilities if we are alone. Sometimes the things she requires of us take a bit more effort than one of us can exert by himself. Frankly, when the Mother-Queen wants something done, it's best to be as efficient as possible. And, again, there are times when it's best to have someone watching your back. There are plenty of others out there who will gladly eat you for breakfast, and some of them are physically capable of doing it.

Have a pack of Garou working in the same area as you? It might help to bring along a friend or two you know you can trust. Are there wererats watching you and whispering

among themselves? Same answer. Been playing a few too many games with the vampires? Maybe you're a bit afraid that they're going to ask you some really ugly questions? It's good to have a friend or two in those situations.

But mostly, it's because we tend to think alike and it's just easier to have the connections. A colony isn't like a pack of Garou. We aren't getting together and dancing the lambada around a campfire, or singing songs of our victories to each other in an effort to feel better about slaughtering a few dozen security guards. We don't need bragging rights, and if the guards were dumb enough to be in the wrong place... well, they should have had better jobs.

But it's a connection to our world, a world that no one else can understand. We don't need to get together, but it helps sometimes to have an ear to bend.

Here's the important part: Now and then, it's great to have a few allies to help you knock the piss and blood out of a pack of enemies. I don't care if you're talking hostile takeover time at the local printing house or cutting down a nest of Black Spiral Dancers who just won't listen to reason. Now and then, you'll need help, and now and then one of the other members of the colony will need your help. That's what it's all about.

So, who is in charge of the colony? Well, that honor goes to the highest-ranking member of the group. And by "in charge" I mean the one who takes command in field operations, such as slapping around Local Steelworkers Union Number 305 when they get uppity. I don't mean that the leader dictates what you do on a day-to-day basis. That privilege is yours... and Ananasa's. But when you're out in the streets, looking to start some grief, someone has to take charge. That's going to be the one whom Ananasa herself has decided deserves the highest rank. Don't disobey, it's stupid.

Just remember that the colony is not tight to the point of incestuous and you'll be fine. Think of it as its own little triumvirate: one part social club, one part business association and one part gossip network, and you've hit upon the right level of complexity.

Gaining Rank

"Let's talk about prestige, shall we?" The lawyer looked out at the group with a faint smile that was one part condescension and one part friendly shyster. "Who gets the right to tell you what to do, now that you're a Damhàn... well, that's easier than you might think to answer. Those of higher rank than you, simply enough. It's rather like the military, or a business, or even family. At the top of this ranking system is Ananasa. She's the commander in chief as it were. She's the Matriarch. So I suppose, in the most literal sense, we are a matriarchy." He shrugged his shoulders beneath the suit that could have bought a week's food for a few hundred children. "Works for me. She gave us all that we have, and she is our Mother in a very real sense."

"But after Ananasa, we have the rest of the Damhàn, and that's a lot of spiders. So we need something a little more from time to time. Not every day, but occasionally. Well, Ananasa came prepared for that, too. If you look very closely at my skin, you'll notice patterns

in the setting of the pores. Those patterns aren't really very obvious. In fact, we're about the only ones who can see them or understand them. They're the markings of my rank, put on me by Ananasa Herself. They mark me as a fifth-rank Secean. That means I've been at this for a long time, and Ananasa feels I've served her well."

Each of us, depending on our Rank, has certain markings that just aren't easily seen by anyone who isn't a Damhàn. That's the Mother-Queen's way of letting us know who's in charge of any given situation.

So the next question is, "how do we go up in rank?" Well, that's a bit more complicated. So let me get down to the basics. First, we have to prove ourselves to Ananasa. That means we have to follow her orders and her laws. That shouldn't be too difficult, they're pretty self-explanatory. Second, to use the phrase most of the Ovid use, we have to gain Renown. That means we have to prove ourselves in specific areas of importance.

Now, here's the weird part: before I explain everything else, I need you to understand that the Ovid often choose to acknowledge the deeds of other Changing Breeds by accepting their Renown, and their Rank in a secondary sort of way. That means they'll allow that you've maybe learned a few things along the way and are, just possibly worthy of a modicum of respect. Not as much as they deserve, naturally, but a little at least. To these other Ovid we state the following as our forms of Renown: Cunning, Obedience and Wisdom. They feel these are acceptable, and if they understood our true Renown system they would know more about us than they should. So, with that in mind, I'll tell you the truth of the matter.

We are judged by Ananasa, not by each other. She judges us on our understanding of the Triat and our place in the Triumvirates that mirror what the Triat should be. We tell the other Ovid that Cunning is important to us; that's only true if by Cunning, you mean the ways of the Destroyer. We tell them that Obedience is significant, and that's true only if you mean the ways of Grandmother Spider when you discuss Obedience. Lastly, we tell the other Ovid that we hold Wisdom in high regard. True as well, if you mean wisdom in the ways of chaos and possibility.

We are judged by our understanding and following of Wyrms, Weaver and Wyld. But we do not offer this knowledge to others: they haven't earned the right to know. We do not discuss this training with any but our own, in places like this where it is safe to do so. Always, I cannot stress this enough, always refer to the Renown you've earned as Cunning, Obedience and Wisdom.

Naturally, depending on your aspect, these things have different levels of importance. Hatar follow the Wyrms, and so Wyrms or Cunning Renown is most significant. For the Tenere, Obedience or the Weaver's ways are the most important, and for the Kumoti, understanding Wisdom or the way of the Wyld is of primary concern.

But it's important to understand everything, all aspects of the Triat, because you should always know your enemy. Symmetry, balance is what we strive to achieve. Always remember that.

The Patterns of Rank

Rank shows itself in different ways, depending on the form of the Ananasi. In human form this pattern is revealed in the setting of the pores on the flesh. For the Lilian, Pithus and Crawlerling, the pattern is discernible on the carapace and most especially around the eyes.

For Tenere, the pattern resembles very fine spider webs that join together. The number of anchoring strands indicates the werespider's rank. Simple lines that run together are an indication of the first rank. Dual lines that cross over each other are indicative of the second rank. Triangular markings indicate the third rank, and webs patterns with four anchoring points indicate the fourth rank. Stylized web patterns with five anchors indicate the fifth rank and with six anchoring lines indicate the incredibly rare sixth rank.

For Hatar the patterns look rather like snakes slithering in unison. The more snakes together in this pattern, the higher the rank. For the Kumoti, the pattern looks rather like stylized lightning bolts crossing over each other. The more "spokes" on the lightning cluster, the higher the rank. A single bolt would indicate Rank One, while a pattern with four spokes would indicate Rank Two, etc.

In all cases, the pattern is a part of the carapace, not a coloration on it. It's in the texture of the skin, not the coloring.

Ananasa judges us by what we have learned, and when the time is right, she promotes us to the next level of Rank, and makes the proper changes in the markings on our bodies.

We have to prove ourselves to Ananasa to gain Rank. While in our Sylie, we must communicate with Ananasa, asking if we are worthy of promotion. She will not answer us with a yes or no, but if we are deemed worthy, the patterns on our flesh will change, and we will be able to learn greater Gifts. It's that simple.

Does Rank have its privileges? Of course. For starters, if I give any of you who follow the Tenere way an order and I outrank you, you'd best listen as long as the orders are sensible. If I tell you to go throw yourself in front of a moving tractor-trailer, you don't have to listen. If, on the other hand, I tell you to transfer all of your funds into a cashier's check and buy 5,000 cans of baked beans with the money, the odds are I have a reason. Don't disobey me. You can question me, that's your right, but don't disobey me.

Mostly the privilege comes in the form of taking more responsibility. If I tell you to do something and it fails, I'm going to hear about it. The Mother-Queen might even punish me. If I live through it, I get the right to punish you in turn. Don't fail on your assignments, it's not a pretty thing to live through.

Now, don't in turn take what I've just told you to mean that I can boss you around any way I please, because that's a lie. I can tell you what to do if the Mother-Queen wants me to tell

you what to do. It means I'm a messenger of her will. It doesn't mean I'm allowed to make you shine my shoes. It means I can warn you if you're doing things the wrong way, because it also means Ananasa has told me to warn you. The biggest privilege that comes from rank is getting more time to speak with Ananasa. She exhausts herself when she speaks to her Children, and the higher in rank, the more likely she is to speak with us, simply to save her energy. That's the way it is.

Special Events

We don't have monthly meetings to get together and reminisce about the past, or to plan the next great strategy on the way to world domination. We don't need them. Most of the time, if we want to get together, outside of the colonies some of us join, we do it with a phone call, or maybe even just drop by to say hello. Fancy that, having a social life instead of a business meeting.

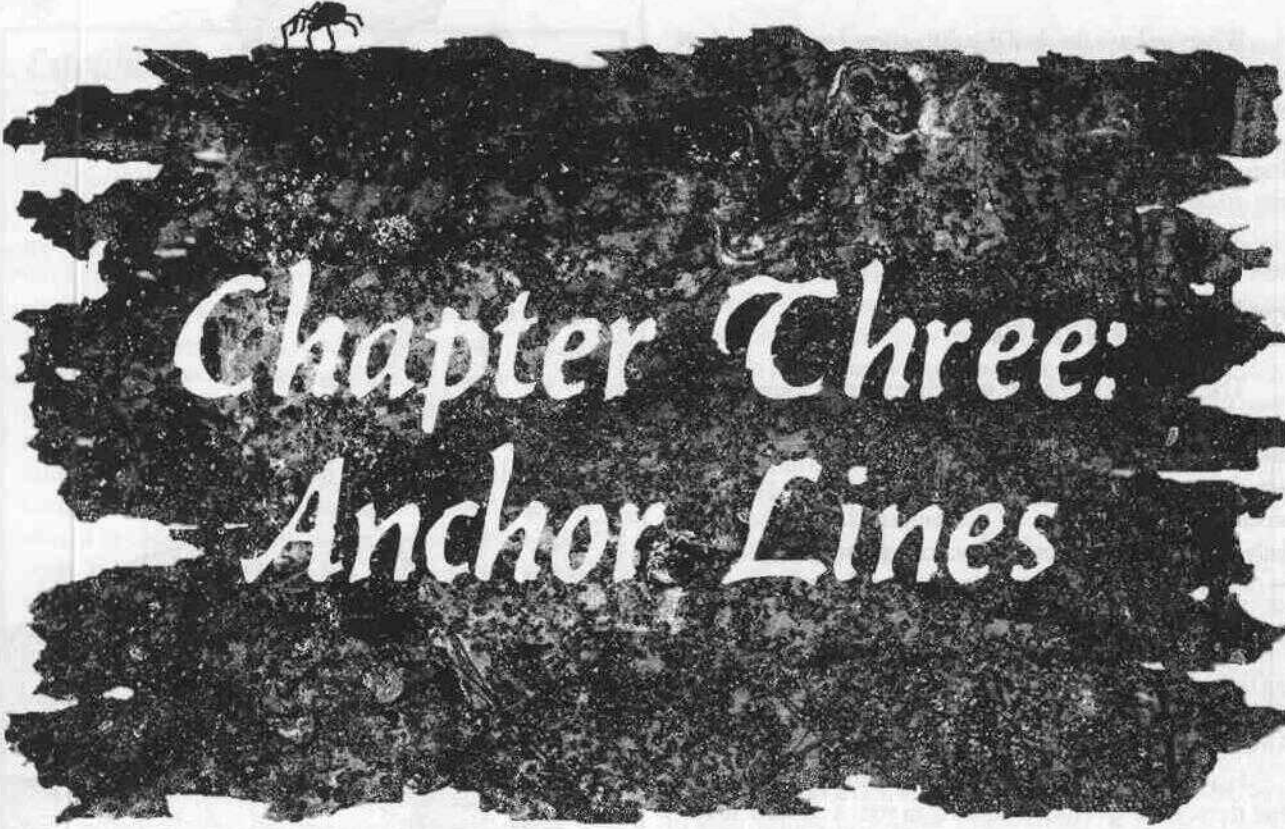
The only time you should expect a call from one of the leaders is when we feel it's time to work out a problem, or when Ananasa calls for it. When that happens, get there on time and be prepared for work.

There are a few exceptions, nothing too standard or stabilized. One of them is what's going on right here and now. No one going into this world should do so in ignorance. When someone goes through the Metamorphosis, Ananasa alerts us, and we gather them together and have a little powwow like this to teach you a few of the ropes. It's easy, it's efficient, and it's a chance to just get together and get to know each other. We don't have a proper name for it, as has already been explained, names can get you in trouble. The Weaver likes names a bit too much. Let's just call it Ananasi Education 101, for lack of a better term.

Other occasions are strictly informal, unless Ananasa wants us to make them formal and deal with a situation. What's that? Of course she'll tell us to get together now and then. That's what she does. She lets us know if there's something she wants handled, and then she has us handle it for her. It isn't an every day event, but you can expect calls from time to time. Like I said before, answer those calls. Do not make us come looking for you. Whatever the situation you're in outside of what you do for the Mother-Queen can wait, trust me on that.

Where do we meet? Wherever. Sometimes it's a restaurant, sometimes we get together at someone's home. Now and then, rarely, we'll meet here. These caves are sacred. In any case, meetings like this can be strange events. Because Ananasa tells us who we're going to sign on with for a mission, and sometimes she even has us join together with someone we'd really rather see dead and buried, or just maimed beyond easy repair. The same rules apply as in this place. All personal agendas are set aside. If three Hatar, two Tenere and half a dozen Kumoti are called together by Ananasa and she wants them to work together, that's what happens. This rule is inviolable. Do not worry about your personal agendas when you're on a mission. Period. When the mission is done, and only after the temporary colony has separated, then you can go back to killing each other. Don't even question it, friends, just accept it as one of Ananasa's rules.





Chapter Three: Anchor Lines

Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
The winding sheet of Edward's race.
Give ample room and verge enough,
The characters of hell to trace.

— Thomas Gray, "The Bard"

There was a silence that fell over the arena, as the young spinners looked at each other to see if any other spiders were thinking things that they weren't. That is to say, there was a silence among the students who were waiting for the others to ask questions, so that they would not be seen as the one least to understand, while the visitor among them had moved from wild cackling to a monotonous giggle.

This was a battle of wits and will, and the nine teachers continued to watch from their posts, waiting for the first to understand the true lesson behind their actions. It was a frail-looking male, with dark hair and pale skin that broke the silence.

"Excuse me, teachers," he said as he stepped into the front of the arena, "all that you are teaching us is well and good, and we could not survive in the world without it... but where in the world are we supposed to live?"

The teachers smiled at each other, and smiled at him. One of the nine, a tall woman with black skin and black hair stood from her seat. She had a broad smile that was different from the others, with a spring in her step that spoke with a graceful joy. All of the spiderlings present watched as she moved to the front, and took control of the crowd.

Bon soir! I have been selected to speak to you of the beauty of the world. Oh, not in so many words, but I have traveled the globe seeking the heights of taste, discovering all that the world has to offer, and I wish to share some of it with you.

In my café in Milan we serve only the best food in the world. I refuse to limit myself to the foods of my native France, or the foods of Italy, or Greece, of America, or any other one place. To sample the best of the world you need to only visit my restaurant. To get those foods into my restaurant, I traveled the world, tasting the best that every culture has to offer. I pulled only the best foods from each locale — and only then after careful study and research — and I duplicated them for my own clientele.

Have you ever tasted a perfect salad? A combination of greens and dressing, or even fruit and sauce, or perhaps a fine purée of beetles over roasted grubs? Don't rule out anything that you have not eaten, simply because you are unaware of its culinary delight. I have eaten hundreds of salads from every country that you could name, in every manner that you could understand, and I have decided what the perfect salad is in this world.

When we have finished this discussion, I will have taken you around the world, and you will have had a chance to sample the best and the worst that every country and land has to offer. You will be taken on a tour of epicurean delight and despair. When we have finished, you will all be able to answer one simple question: what is the best salad in the world?

We have an understanding, *non? Bien sur!* We shall now begin.

The Homelands

There is no feeling in the world like the one you get when you return home. That sensation of comfort and realization that can come from no other place in the world; the realization that, no matter what else happens, you are in your own private haven, away from all the dangers that confront you daily. That sensation is only a fraction of what you will feel if — or rather, when you return to your true homeland.

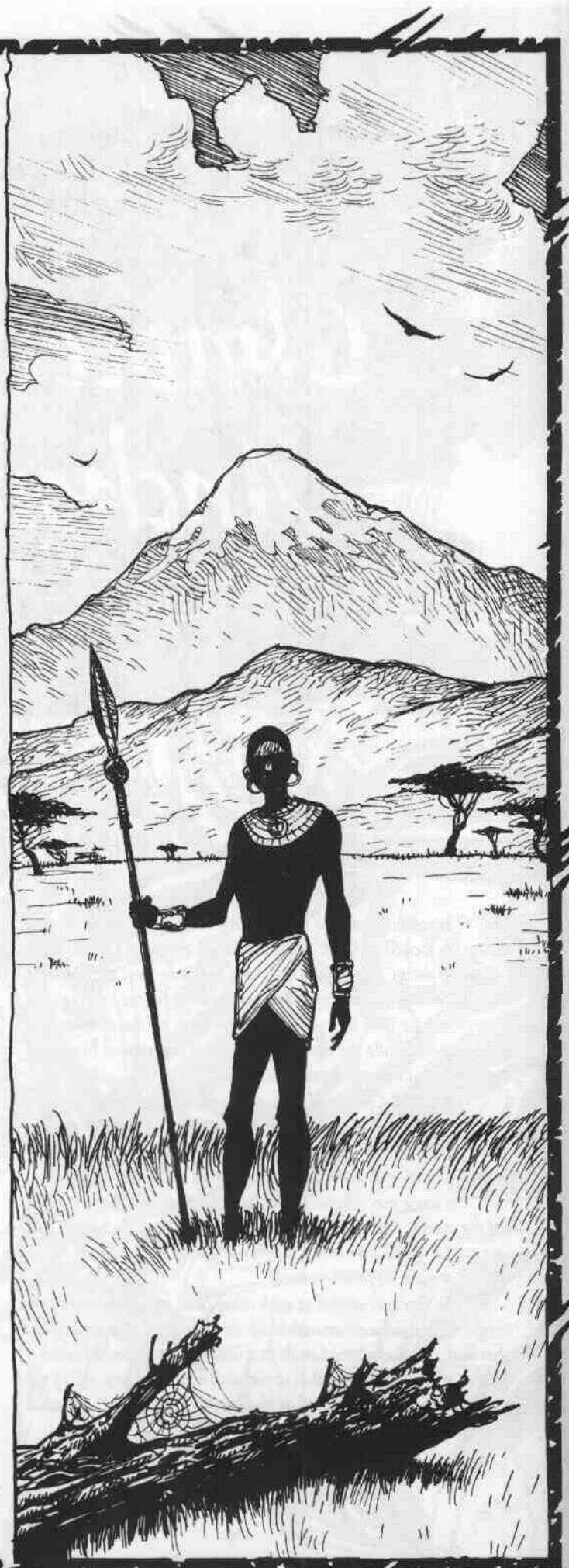
You might think that you are born of France, or the United States, or some other land where you dwell most often, but that is not your true place of birth. All of us come from the homelands, and unless you are native to Africa or South America, you are not in the homeland most of your life.

I can already hear some of you whispering to yourselves that these countries mean nothing to you. You have heard the stories of our origins, and relate what that might mean in the grand scheme of history, but you do not relate it to your life, *n'est-ce pas?* You are children. You have just been born, truly, and like the child first emerging from the womb, you are just becoming accustomed to the world. Do not presume that your previous little place holds all the magic and wonder that these sacred lands can hold. These lands are like moving from gruel to Chateaubriand; there is simply no comparison.

The lands of Africa are vast and diverse, and there is no corner that the Ananasi do not call their own. From the deserts of the Sahara, to the deepest jungles of the Congo, you will find us living in the glory of Ananasa's light, for there is nowhere else that her presence can be better felt. Do not let the stories deceive you; there are many reports of food shortages throughout the continent, but this simply isn't the case. Of course, the poorer folk are a little small, but if you capture enough of them, they can make a fine meal. Still, even in this delightful land, there is no place as grand as the Simyan Mountains and Estotilandia.

Estotilandia

The Moslems have Mecca. The Christians have Jerusalem. We have Estotilandia. When you visit this place you are entering holy ground, and you must show it the proper respect. This is not a place where we will war with each other. This is a place of peace and contemplation. A place of joy and contentment. A place to wander in any form that makes you feel free and comfortable, where you can contemplate the message of Ananasa and your role in her kingdom.





Estotilandia of the Past and Present

When we first crawled out of the caves of our birth, and stepped onto the formative lands that would one day become known as Africa, we knew that we were in a sacred land. Ananasa herself had chosen this place for us to enter this world; She had chosen the land that was our home, and no one could take it from us.

We were not the only creatures in this land, but it was not the others' home, it was simply a place for them to be at that time — the wrong place. A crawler who has come to be called Limuloida took the first steps to secure the area. He stood guard at the entrance to the gate, killing any that dared to step too near. Slowly, he began to seek out any within visual sight of the caves. Then, he started to claim a territory. But he was only one, and he could not stop everything. His tireless efforts proved greater than his form could withstand, and he was killed by a marauding pack of beasts. There was no one to take his singular place; no one with the devotion that he preached. There was no one, so we acted as a whole. We started a war. The War for the Homeland.

There was no official declaration, nor was there a specific enemy that we had to combat. We simply had to eliminate all other life near the caves of our birth. It was a war against all life that dared to invade what was — and is to this day — a place where others were not meant to be. It was not a short, nor was it an easy war. Many lifetimes were spent securing this land, but when it was finished, we had achieved our goal.

In the process of clearing the land, we drew up orders that exist to this day. The Limuls are the force that guard the borders of Estotilandia. It is not just a title, but an honor to achieve this position. They are protectors of a place that is not meant for any of the food races. The Ananasi that have been chosen to maintain the lands within are called the Pax. These rare spiderlings have never known life outside of Estotilandia, and keep these lands sacred by their presence. They maintain the landscape by the order of Ananasa herself, and are the only of our kind that do not weave a Sylie, but live in the caves of our original birth. They have a special bond with the Great Mother, and reflect her mood to us, giving us a better understanding of her feelings. The Limuls bring food to them, so that they may continue to give us insight with every action.

These are the ones that keep our haven, and the story of how their duty came to pass.

Estotilandia is a haven to all, but a home to only those that are chosen. Even the few that are chosen to guard this sacred land do not live inside its beauty, protecting the sacred few within. The guardians patrol the border of this paradise without fail, keeping it safe from all that are not of our kind.

There are none that are allowed inside this place that are not of Ananasa. There are none that know of this realm that are not of Ananasa. We hold this as one of our sacred creeds, that no one save the Ananasi shall set foot in Estotilandia, and any that attack or disgrace this place shall be destroyed.

You do not have to wait for an invitation to Estotilandia, as it is open to all Ananasi, at all times, in all circumstances, you have but to make the journey. Ah, *bien*, some of you already have the question in your eyes: where is this paradise? I have told you already: in the Simyan mountains in Africa. It is not a pilgrimage if you do not need to make the journey, and part of that journey is one of discovery. You will know when the time is right for you to go, and you will know the means to find the way. Until then, do not let your mind dwell in paradise, or you will lose your place in the rest of the world.

The Great Cats

If you choose to visit the homelands, whether it be Africa or South America, you will have to contend with one difficulty: Cats. The great Cats, the Bastet, have chosen both of these lands as their own, and they protect them with a ferocious demeanor. It is odd that they feel we are not close cousins — or perhaps it is the way of cats — but they do not look upon us as allies, and will even think of us as intruders in their homes. *Incroyable!* These young creatures actually look upon us as the intruders, when they have broken into our lands and claimed them as their own. They are but children, and if treated as such are relatively harmless, though these are indeed children with claws.

Do not take all of your eyes off of the Bastet, as they are a curious breed with a lust for solving the mysteries of life. To them, you are a mystery. If they cannot solve the mystery, or if it loses its interest, they are just as likely to destroy it. The trick is to keep the mystery growing and changing. Add flavor to their lives on a constant basis, dropping clues that they must follow, and you will have these kittens eating out of your hands. If you leave them alone, they will start to play with you for their own amusement, and continue until you are dead. It is best to have them amused, and not have them kill you.

In Africa, the main concern is the Simba. These beasts are cruel and without remorse, and they treat all intruders as enemies. The best way to deal with them is to confront them with strength. These creatures only understand and recognize force, and if you treat them as they treat each other, you have a chance of gaining their respect. You do not need their regard, but it is easier to avoid a confrontation than to survive it, *non?*

You will also find the Swara living on the Great Plains — if they want you to. The Swara do not trust us, nor do they like us. This is not a great problem, but a fact to remember. If you see one of these creatures, it is for a reason. Pay them close heed, as they are harbingers of a strong message, whether for good or ill.

In the jungle regions of South America, there is only one Cat of prominence, the Balam. The Balam and the

Ananasi have much in common, and we both respect our privacy in these lands. This is both a boon and a hindrance. It is beneficial to us, as they do not seek out others as enemies. It is dangerous as they consider any in their territories as their enemies without question. If you know where they live, you can avoid them, which is the right choice to make. If you don't know where they live, and you wander into their domain, you will find out.

The Balam do have an annoying tendency of having their young seek their own territory, quite often not far from where they are born. That means that they have no problem in moving into your territory, and then claiming it as their own, and once they have done that... ah, *c'est la guerre*.

The one common thread that keeps our kinds from constant conflict is our alliance against a mutual foe: man. The rainforests that we call home are being destroyed at an alarming rate, and if the destruction travels far enough, then the plans of Ananasa will be affected, and that is something that we cannot

The Nazca Plains

In memory of the past, and as a warning in the present, it is said that an unnamed Kar created what has come to be called the Nazca Plain Paintings. These massive designs depict animals in a strange state. The humans have come to think of them as some marvels of a long dead society, but that isn't the truth. These are paintings by our society, and they serve a very direct purpose.

South America is a stronghold for our kind, particularly in the areas near the Andes Mountains. The Corax are long our enemies, and they, as much as any, are responsible for what happened to us in the War of Rage. We do not want any of their kind there, and we do not want the Garou to encroach upon our lands. So, there is a reminder.

To the untrained eye, huge images of a bird, a monkey, and a spider seem to dominate these plains, surrounded by odd lines that have no direct meaning. To the Corax, this message is clear. The raven cannot come near the spider, and to reach towards us would bring the wrath of man down upon their kind. Our influence in the world is far greater than theirs at this point in history, and we are more than willing to make their life impossible if they come near our lands.

The Corax are excellent messengers of information. By letting them know that this is not land for any save the Ananasi, the others will know as well. We are not known for our compassion or understanding, so explaining things in simple terms, with permanent markings is a wise decision.

As for the monkey... well, there are some rumors of a Nuwisha wanting to make a point of his own, but we know what happens to Nuwisha that want to play jokes on the Ananasi, don't we? That is a reminder, as well.

abide. Together we strive to keep the jungles whole, but there are too many humans to stop them, we can only slow them down. This makes the mission of those in South America so much more troubled and important, and any aid that we can get is welcome — as long as our allies remember their place.

The Old Ones

In South America you will find others that are certainly noteworthy, namely the Mokolé. These magnificent creatures are to be given a wide berth, as we are the ones that have invaded their lands, and they are dying faster than any other of the Changing Breeds. It is a waste to see these noble ones withdraw from the world, and we must remember to watch and learn from their actions. It has long been said that those that do not learn from history are destined to repeat its mistakes; the Mokolé are our predecessors, and if their history does not teach us a lesson, then we shall surely suffer the same fate.

Just as the Balam and the Ananasi protect their homes, the Mokolé protect theirs. The difference is that the Balam and the Ananasi also protect the homes of the lizard kings. It is an unwritten pact between us that they shall have their lands, and they shall remain safe from us. This is not to say that they may act without repercussion. If they violate our lands, we drive them off. (And might I add that they are allegedly quite delicious.) But they are not creatures that seek the same refuge as we, and rarely do conflicts arise. Also, we are not their guardians. It is wrong to humiliate them in such a manner, but we will stop anything that threatens them, if it is within our power and in our path, whether it directly concerns us or not.

Sadly, this is not a feeling that is shared. The Mokolé rarely, if ever, step to our aid, and we won't ask it of them. It is enough that we can watch and learn from them. Besides, they act in ways that we could not survive; their strengths are our weaknesses, and we cannot become such direct warriors. It is their way, and it is not ours, so it is best that we watch, and they are oblivious.

The New Lands

If you choose to live in Europe or North America, you must be prepared for a much more structured life. The discipline of secrecy will become your mantra, and the rigid structure of human life will decide your actions on a daily basis. There are many of us that not only adapt well to this human lifestyle, but embrace it as a useful tool of control, not only for our lives but to use against our enemies. Strangely, there are more enemies in the so-called civilized world than there are in any other location, but those enemies also have enemies, so many times we find ourselves with unwitting allies.

Life in Europe and North America is much more structured than life in the homelands. You spend much time in your human form, and you discover that your Sylie is much smaller and compact than the more broad, beautiful

structures that are sometimes created deep in the wilderness of Africa or South America. Not even the wilderness of North America is as suited to these designs, instead having smaller sanctuaries that are built in basements and closets of homes and apartments. Ah, but it is not the size of the Sylie that matters, only what you are able to learn from it, *non*?

The biggest difficulty in Europe is the idea of proximity. To live within human society, you will be very near the humans at all times. They are a nasty breed. They are constantly trying to take your secrets from you, judging you by your actions or lack of action, and bringing sentence down upon anything that seems out of the ordinary. Of course, they are horribly impatient, so giving them what they are looking for is a simple way to distract them from you for any length of time. Better yet, give them something else to look at and they may never notice you at all. Unfortunately, there are some that are only looking for very specific things, and we are those things.

Pentex

There has been much debate over the matter of the Pentex Corporation, which ultimately seems like arguing over the color of the sky. Pentex is merely another facet of the Wyrms at its worst, and just another company at its best. Many of our kind work for Pentex. I, myself, once catered their European stockholders' meeting. *Everyone that I dealt with was fine and polite, and they paid me very well.*

Pentex, for those of you that are unaware, is a large corporation that has many fingers in many pies. What is more, they are, shall we say, an entity unto themselves. They are an agent of the Wyrms, corrupt through and through, and trying to use the power that they gain in the mortal world to corrupt the rest of humanity, or destroy it if all else fails. They have companies that produce almost everything imaginable, and they are willing to use all of their holdings for their goals. While there is nothing wrong with a nod to the Wyrms in life, this company does not understand how to temper its force with the rest of the Triat.

The forces of Pentex discovered our kind many years ago, and took great interest in us. They see us not only as a force to contend with, but as a threat to their view of the Wyrms. Our relationship with the Wyrms is much more pure than theirs. We understand the true nature of his force, while they see him only as the Corrupter. Very limited, *n'est-ce pas*? Unfortunately, they are a very powerful enemy, and they will capture us, torture us, examine us, and treat us with none of the respect that we should be shown. They are the *grand mal*, the ultimate evil. They are a force that won't stop until they have gotten from us all that they want, and we can only try to stop them.

They have experimented on our kind, drawing out our venom for their own poisons. They have tried to corrupt our minds, turning us against our own kind, much in the same way as the Black Spiral Dancers have turned against the

Garou, but we cannot, *non*? We are tied to the Wyrms, and our corruption is not so easy a thing. Even more, they have gone so far as to create horrible atrocities that look and act much as we, and they have used these pawns to attack us and discover our secrets and further their plans.

What they do not understand is that we wish to use them for a role in our plans. Their influence and resources are too great not to take advantage of, and so we will take advantage of what they have. The secret is trying to work with them, without them finding us in their midst. In addition to their corporate holdings, they have many mystical and powerful forces at their command. We send in our own agents, and they try to root them out, so we must choose our spies wisely. It is the Hatar that have dominated this area, as they best reflect the interests of Pentex; some of the Hatar have even moved into high ranking positions in the lesser branches of Pentex.

Needless to say, this has angered some of the Garou that have discovered the Ananasi. But what difference does this make? The puppies are already distrustful of us, and they are more than willing to look for any reason to validate this claim. We, on the other hand, are simply able to tell them that, like the Garou, there are Ananasi that are tainted by the Wyrms. The Garou have accepted this explanation, thinking that those are outcasts among us, just as they would be outcasts among their kind. It is a difference not worth explaining, *n'est-ce pas*?

The Garou

The anger of the Garou remains our most destructive foe, and they are at their most dangerous in the lands of Europe and North America. It is these lands that the *petits chiens* have chosen to call their own. They imagine themselves the grand champions of the world, and consider these places the heart of the world, obviously, as they very rarely have influence or actions outside their chosen lands. What arrogance for such hateful beasts.

Nonetheless, these creatures still consider us their enemy, and will act to destroy us if they feel we pose any threat. Of all the Changing Breeds, we are easily the most hated by the Garou. Perhaps it is because they do not understand us, but I prefer to think it is because they fear us. *Bon*. This is the attitude that they deserve.

If you choose to live in either Europe or North America, you are likely to encounter the Wolves. Do not treat them as enemies, but do not take them lightly. The Garou are formidable opponents, quick to anger and attack, but they are trying to work past their nature — as silly as that might sound. If they want to be your allies, let them. If they want to be your friends, let them think that they are. If they want to be your enemies, avoid them. If they want to be your killers, destroy them. I have discovered that the Garou are best enjoyed if you let them age for a few days before consuming them; they taste a bit harsh otherwise.



It is best to avoid the Garou, but it is not always possible. We keep our numbers rather thin in Europe and North America just for that reason. It is best for them to think that they outnumber us, or they will become even more paranoid than they already are. If you have a matter that is best handled by contact with a Wolf, do not let past indiscretions hinder you. We do not forget what they have done to us in the past, and we will not let them forget, but every situation calls for the right answer, and if the Garou are the answer we will use them properly.

The Outer Lands

It is easy to talk about and understand the lands that most of you are from, but there are other areas that you should discover. That isn't to say that you don't know of these places, but you do not comprehend our roles in these places. What it is like to be a child of Ananasa in a land that looks at our kind in a very different light. What it is like to not be the dominant species. What it is like to be an agent of Ananasa, instead of a servant.

We are spies in The Outer Lands — Asia, Australia, India, and the surrounding areas — bringing information about the others in those lands, and giving hope to the few that seek our kind. In these places we have many enemies, and very few friends — though our allies are very loyal indeed.

Only the most able and crafty of spiders can crawl their way into these lands unhindered. They must be prepared to hide and deceive beyond normal levels. Our kind is not viewed in the same light in these areas as they are in our strongholds. We are seen as invaders, enemies, and sometimes as gods. None of these roles are meant to be taken lightly. As you travel into these lands your connection to Ananasa will become strained, creating bizarre thoughts and ideas in your mind. Many of our kind have been lost in these extreme places, and their whereabouts remain unknown.

If you travel to these lands, do so only at the behest of Ananasa. There are dangers that are not easily dealt with, and are troublesome to talk about, but you must understand everything if you are to concentrate on one specific idea.

The Kumo

Of the difficulties in Asia, the easiest to discuss is the Kumo. The Kumo are the most advanced and well documented form of insanity that has invaded the Ananasi of the Outer Lands. These servants of Ananasa have chosen to follow the dictates of the Wyrms above all others, thinking that they follow the destroyer above even the Mother-Queen herself. Yes, you heard correctly: they believe this to be true. Ananasa has chosen them for this role, giving them over to the Wyrms for purposes that are of Ananasa's choosing. She has great plans for these poor, deluded spiderlings, but they are not meant to know this fact.

Nevertheless, these aberrations are quite disturbing. They do not act as an Ananasi should. They are too



emotional. Oh, it is fine to show emotion, but it is a carefully planned action. You mustn't rage blindly the way that these monsters will at times. We are careful creatures, not the frightful obscenities of the East.

Our role in this great plan is simple: we watch. We are the eyes of Ananasa, reaching into the lands the Kumo claim as theirs to give clear reports back to her. We sit in silence, we watch with patience, and we count the days. Our sole duty in these lands is to report the actions of the Kumo, but the Kumo are proud of their secrets, and do not consider us welcome cousins. Many legendary battles have occurred between the Kumo and the spy, most of them not ending in the favor of the true Ananasi.

If you are chosen to become an agent of Ananasa, spying on the Kumo, then you are to be honored. Only those with extraordinary survival skills are selected to invade this foreign land. Gird yourself for conflict and difficulty, as you will not find peace or comfort in your life. It is a difficult thing to hear, but it is the truth. The Kumo are dangerous, and you will find yourself fighting for your life — and quite possibly not surviving.

Do not think that these lands are restricted, or that the only visitors are spies in service to Ananasa. The Kumo are solitary creatures that try to avoid the places of man, so short trips for specific reasons are simple, and can be quite enjoyable. I have made almost a dozen separate visits to China, Japan, and other countries in the area, and have had nothing but wonderful experiences. But I have not encountered the Kumo, nor do I have any desire to do so.

(For more information on the Kumo, be sure to check out *Hengeyokai: Shapeshifters of the East*, available at fine stores everywhere.)

The Kumatai

Far more disturbing than the obvious decision of the Kumo, is the mystery that has come to be known as the Kumatai. The Kumatai is similar to the Kumo in one way, and unlike anything we have encountered in many others. The Kumatai is an Ananasi that has chosen to forsake Ananasa for another, but the disturbing element is that they have forsaken the Mother-Queen for themselves.

The mystery of the Kumatai is occurring throughout India and on into the Middle East, and even into parts of North Africa — and on rare occasion, in the lands of the Americas — without obvious pattern or purpose. The Ananasi are not unknown in these lands, and even are common in places, though some of these lands border those of the Kumo, so we keep a low profile and mild demeanor. Still, it is in our nature to eventually have dealings with others, either as friends, as enemies, or as food, and there are some Ananasi in these lands that have changed. Their connection to Ananasa has been lost, replaced with something quite unsettling.

The Ananasi in those lands discover something amazing about the people who truly respect the spider: they do

not fear us. To them, we are almost like gods. They revere us as agents of their chosen spirits, come to Earth to guide and teach them. This is a very different response compared to what normally happens when a human becomes aware of our true identity, and the effect is not without intoxicating elements. Certain Ananasi will feed off this sensation and move into more isolated areas, where the response to their identity can be even more extreme, placing them as new spirits in the eyes of some humans. These are the ones that become the Kumatai.

The Kumatai have set themselves up as gods on Earth. They are worshipped with servile reverence as spirits, and accorded all of the dignities that are normally kept for much higher life forms. As they reach this lofty place in the eyes of the humans, their minds shut themselves off from the Great Mother. They lose contact with Ananasa, and forget their role and place in The Great Web. They become large, bloated versions of themselves, professing wisdom beyond their means, and answers beyond their understanding. More bizarre than this is the fact that they deny their own birth. When confronted, they do not claim to be a part of the Ananasi, but a part of a new web called the Kumatai — the holy spider. They are not initially violent in their convictions, but the harder you press, the harder they press back. This ailment is puzzling, and there are even records of Ananasi going to speak with these misguided creatures to help them back, only to have the second Ananasi falling under the same spell.

Ananasa has not spoken to us on this matter. It is widely considered that she is aware of the situation, and that she has given these spiders over to this role in a similar manner to that of the Kumo, but the reasons are very unclear. But we are Ananasi, and we know the benefit of patience.

The Yahwie

Many of you might be considering a life in the land of Australia. Reconsider. There is no more terrifying a place on this world than Australia. Do not think of the cuddly image of the koala and the kangaroo, think instead of death without end, and of fear without cessation.

Until about 100 years ago, the Ananasi thrived in Australia. We wandered the vast landscape with freedom, enjoying the lands as much as any other, but then things started to change. Dozens of Ananasi were found slaughtered in the wilds, causing a hunt for the responsible party. None of the hunters were found alive, but their remains were found scattered across acres of land. Not even in their Crawlerling form were they able to escape this death. We feared the worst, and perhaps we were correct.

The Aboriginal people have a legend that describes a creature that they call the Yahwie. This ferocious beast has been given many forms, from a large manlike creature to a beast with the head of a lizard and the legs of an insect on a massive form that could level mountains. They say that it is one of the original beings on the planet, a Death-spirit that

is responsible for the first killings on this world. We are here to tell you that it is not a legend, but a very real danger.

It was not until it first appeared in the city that we identified our enemy. An Ananasi walking the streets of Melbourne was suddenly attacked by a large man, dressed all in black, who killed the helpless female without hesitation. At first it seemed to be a random event, but when another of our kind was slain in the same manner two days later it became apparent that someone was hunting us. The large man continued on his spree for almost a week before leaving town. In all, five Ananasi were slaughtered, but no one else. There were dozens of human witnesses, all describing a man that moved straight to his victim, and promptly tore the head from the body. No words, no hesitation, just simple destruction.

Four of our finest hunters were sent out to destroy this beast. Two of them came back reporting the death of their prey. Five days later, both of them were found dead in their own homes. One of them had tried to escape in Crawlerling form, but it was pointless; thousands of dead spiderlings were found in his home, each a former piece of his own body.

The deaths have continued ever since. Very few of our kind live in this land, and this is for good reason. Hundreds of Ananasi have died over the past century, and dozens of times the Yahwie has been reported killed, and each time it has returned to continue its spree.

We have no idea what this creature is, save the lessons that we have learned from the Aborigines: it is death. I spent two days in Sydney once, and I did not sleep the entire time. There are still some that insist that this is nothing more than a legend, and continue to live in Australia to this day, but our kind is extremely rare on that distant continent. We are not a superstitious race, and we do not create myths to terrify our children, but this is what the Yahwie has become. The humans tell their children the story of some great beast that will come in the night to take them away, a boogiemán that defies description. The Yahwie is the boogiemán come to life, and he is coming after the Ananasi.

Despite the troubles, we will not give up on this land. Australia is rich in both food and knowledge, and we will find a way to reclaim it as one of our lands. We still live safely in New Zealand, Tasmania, and many of the surrounding islands. Our kind is ready to take back the land, but we must first find a way to destroy this creature once and for all, or the terror will continue.

The Remaining Lands and Relations

There is not much to say about the other lands of the world. You already know that we do not live in Antarctica, or in any area near the Arctic Circle, but there are few other places that we avoid. The climates that best suit us are warm, as they allow us greater movement and freedom to grow. Some of us do not choose to live in this realm, however, and they deserve to be mentioned.

Umbra Spiders

Some of Ananasa's Children have forsaken the world altogether, and have chosen to explore the realm of the other world, the Umbra. The Ananasi that live in the Umbra lead a life that is very different from that of an Earthly spider. Most of their life is spent in Pithus, a huge spider wandering the endless pathways that the universe has to offer. There are no humans to deal with, and very little in the way of life to feed from, so many of these spiders must travel back to Earth to find a meal from time to time, before returning to their own realms.

The Sylie of the Umbra Spider is a massive creation, taking up what would be several football fields — soccer, of course, to the Americans. This creation is not meant for any purpose beyond defense and communion with Ananasa. You might think that these spiders have a more clear path of communication with The Great Mother, but such is not the case. The size of the Sylie is to help focus her message, bringing it in more clearly. We were created to walk the Earth, and our creator speaks with us in on this mortal plane; to communicate to those in the Umbra requires that she turn her attention from the majority of her brood, and that is not the way of Ananasa.

The dwellers of the Umbra also must deal with the other denizens of that realm. To those that visit, you are unlikely to see the spirits and monsters that travel on those magical paths, but the few that live there see them constantly, and must discover ways to survive, which is not an easy task. If you would choose to forsake Earth, do so with some hesitancy; only the most solitary of spiders would ever decide to live in the Umbra.

The tall, dark woman smiled at the gathered spiderlings. It was obvious that her words weren't ignored by the gallery. "I am glad that you have listened and learned from my words. Listen to all that everyone has to say, and you shall become fine additions to the colony. Au revoir."

She turned from the students and began to walk away, with careful grace and speed. She stopped after only a few steps. "You have a question, non?"

The pale young man that first spoke stood from his seat. He had said nothing, and kept his mouth closed, but she heard him, nonetheless.

"Madame," he began, "at the beginning of your dissertation, you mentioned an analogy of a salad. What was the purpose?"

The dark woman turned, her face lined with a sharp smile. "Yes. The salad. What of it?"

"You said that we would know what made for the perfect salad." The youth kept his tone calm and respectful. "I would like to know, what is this salad?"

"That depends," the woman continued, "what is it exactly that you are eating?"

He blinked at her twice. "I don't understand."

The woman walked down from the podium area, and moved into the spiderlings that were milling about, paying special attention to her words. She walked directly up to the child, and gently touched his face.



"Would the same salad go well with steak that does with crêpes?" She asked. "At what point do you want to eat your salad? Is it the first course, the final course, or a supplement to the main course? Is it meant to cleanse the palate, or is it better suited to enhance the flavor of the other dishes? What is its role?"

The young boy looked into her cold eyes, finding the answer that he had sought. "That is for me to decide. The perfect salad is the perfect compliment to the meal that you have chosen. You cannot know how to accent your meal, until you know what you're having as a main course. I cannot decide the little things until I have decided what I am ultimately going to become."

She smiled at his words, and began walking him towards their giggling guest. "Tres bien! You have earned a treat. Let me tell you another secret: there is one spot on a Nuwisha that has a flavor unlike any other. It can be our little secret. I will show you."

Survival

A young girl stepped before the students, just barely in her teens by the look of her. She had long blonde hair pulled into a ponytail, and wore a cheerleader's outfit. Her demeanor proclaimed that she knew exactly how attractive she was. "I'm here to speak to you about survival and about the many forms you can now assume to ensure your survival." She lifted one eyebrow when she heard a few of the students snicker.

"You don't think I'm qualified to discuss such matters?" She slipped down from the slightly raised outcropping from which all the instructors had spoken, walking among the younger, more inexperienced Ananasi. She walked among her peers, looking each of them in the eye before moving to the next. "How old do you think I am? 14? 15? Well, I'll have you know that I'll be celebrating my 69th birthday in the very near future. Yes, I rather thought you'd find that surprising. Before you ask the question I see on your lips, I'll go ahead and answer it for you. No. We are not immortals. We can die of old age, we can die from injuries, and we can die when one of us feels a sudden need to feast on another. So, technically, we are not immortal. But we can come fairly damned close to the idea if we feel like it... and if Ananasa permits it."

She smiled at them, the sort of smile many of them had dreamed of seeing on a face like hers, especially directed at them. It stirred old emotions, old desires, but muted. That alone made several of the Damhàn in the cave truly realize how much they had changed with the Metamorphosis.

"I thought that would get your attention. No questions, not just yet." She moved with the sinuous grace of a predator, walking through the crowd and touching each of them. "I'll answer your questions soon enough. First, you have to listen to my speech, no matter how boring you might find it. Ah, ah, ah..." she gently chided, "Patience is a virtue."

She moved over to the Nuwisha still bound in webbing, and ran a hand across his forehead. He cringed, still giggling incessantly and throwing a few whimpers into his usual background noises. She sat next to him, patting him affectionately. "You'll learn everything you need to know, just bear with me for a while longer."

We have four established forms, which all have their own names. We'll go over each of them, some of their advantages

and disadvantages in a moment. But understand this: no matter what I tell you about what we can and can't do, we're not immortal. Never take for granted that any form you have is impervious to harm. Better to be wary of all risks at all times.

Homid

The human form is one of the basics. In this shape, which the Garou and other Ovid often call "Homid" for whatever reason suits their fancy, we are as close as we will ever get to being mortal. X-rays show that we are human, but are likely to show a few strange shadows that doctors can't explain. Most doctors look at the anatomy of an Ananasi in human form and then decide their tests were inconclusive or corrupt, but there are a few who would look a second time. Avoid doctors; it's for the best. Why? Because contrary to what might happen with the other Changing Breeds, we are not human anymore. We can merely look the part. After the First Metamorphosis, our organs aren't quite human anymore, and our blood, while often red, isn't human either. Humans have hemoglobin molecules in their blood. These molecules have an iron base. Spiders have hemocyanin molecules in their blood. They have a copper base. We have both types of molecules in our blood. We also have vestigial fangs and pedipalps behind our teeth. Lastly, there's a bit of a difference in our lungs, which are an unusual merging of standard human lungs and the book lungs of spiders. Damnedest thing, to my knowledge this doesn't occur in any of the other Ovid. But then, we aren't quite like any of the others, as you've probably guessed by now. They can't break themselves down into hundreds and hundreds of little, bitty spiders. We can. Despite these differences, we can and frequently do — at least in my case — mate with humans. Something to do with genetic codes and the right form of hormones in our bodies. I personally don't care enough to study the issue in depth. I much prefer to simply enjoy the facts for what they are and leave details on human-Ananasi breeding to those of us who find the matter interesting.

Why do we call our form human? Because that's what it is for all intents and purposes. We call our human form human and we call our spider forms by their proper names, which are different. The reason for this is remarkably simple. The name is easy to remember for the human form, and the rest of our forms need a bit more explanation. Also, words and names are things of power. Those who follow the Weaver's way can use names against you if they have the right knowledge. That's why I'll never tell any of you my real name. It's none of your business, and you just might have opportunity to use it against me some day. Bit of advice? Come up with a simple name to give to those you meet. While you're at it, come up with an appropriately strange name for dealing with the Ovid. They all have tribal names, and they'll just feel even stranger about you if you don't have something along the same lines to tell them. I tell most people my name is Christy. I tell the Ovid my name is Walks-on-Moonlight. Most of them seem to like the name. What the hell?



Lilian

The second form we take is quite powerful, and rather disquieting to most of those we meet. We call it the Lilian form. It serves a purpose, just as the others. The difference is, it's mostly meant for serious combat and intimidation. Do you have any idea how many people have arachnophobia? I suffered from it myself before my Metamorphosis. Little bastards used to scare the hell out of me. One tiny little eight-leggedger and I'd have my dress around my knees and be dancing the fandango on a chair, screaming for someone, anyone, to save me from the nasty crawly thing. Just knew they'd eat me alive if they ever got hold of me. Imagine my surprise...

At any rate, the Lilian form is unique for each of us. Sometimes we feel the need to walk upright, and sometimes we still walk like a spider. Sometimes we're about as hairy as your average ape, and sometimes the shell we develop is decidedly smooth and shiny. A part of that comes from whatever territory we've dwelled in the past. We are what we eat, if you catch my drift.

Yes, I said shell. Also known as an exoskeleton. That's one of the biggest changes. Our skin hardens, and our muscles go through some radical alterations. Hell, I've even run across a few Ananasi who developed barbs and spines on their exoskeleton. Mean looking bastards. I'm still working on that little trick, but I haven't mastered it yet.

We can change the form of our Lilian bodies, but it takes lots of practice and a diet consisting heavily of spiders, mostly the sort of spiders we want to take aspects from. The best we can figure, the Lilian form is something that our minds have drawn up, a combination of form and function that each of us finds pleasing. Some of us have almost human faces when we change, and others look decidedly arachnoid when it's all said and done. Is arachnoid a word? I have no idea, but it works as well as humanoid, doesn't it?

At any rate, we are stronger, faster and tougher in Lilian than we are in human. We also get a circulatory system that is much more spider than human at that point. That means we can do things differently, like lifting weights we could never hope to lift in human form, and, with some of us, jumping several stories into the air with the greatest of ease. Most of us also put on good hundred or so pounds when we get to the Lilian stage of transformation.

Now for the strange part. Some us don't change the same way others do. No, I don't mean how we look, I mean what we can do. Some male spiders are physically weaker than females of the same species. Just the same way that, in humans, females are sometimes smaller and slightly weaker than their male counterparts. It's something that carries over. In some cases the differences are negligible, but in a lot of cases, the changes are significant.

Pithus

Now, boys and girls, we get the heart of the matter. The Pithus form. Sometimes people call this the Pit Spider form. Either way works just as well, but what it means is really, really

big spider. How big? Well, that depends on your normal mass. If you normally weigh 150 pounds, your Pithus form will weigh in at around 225 pounds. That might not sound like such a big deal, but when you consider the anatomy of a spider, that means a substantial increase in strength, durability and damage potential. You get about half your weight again, but it's spread out in spider form. Well, with a few qualifiers. First, just as with the human form, you're getting a blend of organs. I've heard a hundred people discuss why insects and arachnids could never get to the same size as humans, because their organs couldn't take the difference in size. Well, that might be true, but we aren't insects or spiders, we're Damhàn. We get the best of both worlds. Once again we get a blend of human lungs and arachnid lungs, and the spirit power that suffuses us makes our flesh and chitin far more efficient than science would dictate. It's just one of the Mother-Queen's little gifts to us. We can breathe more efficiently, and we can react for longer times than either of our kin.

But one of the biggest advantages to this form comes from the fact that spiders are... well, hydraulic in nature. Their muscles don't work in the same way, and neither does their circulatory system. Spiders can shift the blood in their bodies, and that allows them to increase the amount of strength they have substantially. Damhàn can do the same thing, but it takes more out of us. Yes, we can increase our strength very efficiently, but we will have to replenish our blood if we do it too often. I personally don't have a problem with that; I like the taste of blood.

Here again, we have the special bonus of adding in the fear factor. All of you who are human from birth, raise your hands. There, that's a good half of you, as it should be. Now, I'm going to ask a question, and I want you to consider the answer. Have you ever really looked at a spider's face and body up close? Have you ever imagined running across one the size of a VW Bug? Think about it for a minute. People run screaming when they see a little spider, so imagine how they feel when they see a tarantula the size of their economy car. It's a wonderful thing to watch. I like fear in my enemies; it adds challenge to the situation. No, not all of those who see us in the Pithus form will turn and run away. A decent number will decide that we must be destroyed at all costs. They get irrational when you mess with their sense of perspective. Still, it's fun to watch in either case.

Crawlerling

Lastly, we come to the form that is the most easily misunderstood. What the Garou call the Crawlerling form. I've also heard the form called the swarm, the army, and the ohmygodlookhowmanyspidersthereare form. They all work as well as any other, I suppose. The Crawlerling, as you've already figured out, is composed of spiders. What kind and how many is up to you to a certain extent. Mostly, it depends on what type of spider you've been eating or what type of spider became a part of you through genetic marriage. That is to say, if your parent had a bit of black widow, you'll be coming along in the same

form. But there are thousands of different types of spider, and you could start off with any of them in your mix.

The more of types you eat, the more interesting the possibilities become. You might start out as a brown recluse, but if you hang around and eat enough wolf spiders, you'll see the differences as they take shape. You'll become more wolf spider and less recluse, if you catch my meaning.

In the long and short of it, you dictate the size of the spiders you become, based on your genetic makeup at the time. I also know a lot of Damhàn who simply take on the form of every spider they've ever eaten when they break apart, and that too has its advantages. You can blend more perfectly into the environment if you know how to handle that little trick. Especially if you haven't moved around much.

What good is the Crawlerling form? Its purposes are incredibly diverse. First, there's defense. It's easy to squash a single spider, but harder to stomp a thousand or so into putty. Mind you, a flame-thrower can handle the job very well, so don't get too cocky, thinking you're immortal. You aren't. Not really. You see, the Crawlerling is when we are most protected and when we are most vulnerable too.

How is that possible? It's very simple. You can once again become a thousand spiders, and at that moment you have to decide which of those spiders will be the leaders and which will be the drones. Our consciousness can inhabit all of the spiders, but it's a little disorienting that way. You cannot be in a thousand places at once and not get thrown by the experience.

Okay, I'll give an example rather than trying to scoop all of you back together. Let's say you've broken into Crawlerling, and you need to escape from an enemy. Just for the sake of argument, we'll go with another werewolf hell-bent on destroying you as a threat to everything he stands for. The first problem is that that Garou is now truly huge in comparison to you. He's so big, in fact, that you can barely see his head if he's standing on his hind legs. It's like trying to see the billboard on the top of a 40-story building; you know it's there, but you might not be able to read it. Oh, sure, you can climb a wall or even the werewolf for a better look. No problem, except that your mind is not capable of taking in as much information as you might imagine it is. You aren't just seeing the giant werewolf, you're seeing the giant werewolf from one thousand or so different perspectives. If you want to consider this in a safe environment, go into a department store that sells televisions, turn each of the fifty or so to a different channel, and try to pay complete attention to what is on each and every one of those screens. Yeah, I can see you pausing now, so just for kicks, multiply that chaos by about 200 and see if you can stay focused on any one thing. Now, while you're trying to figure out what to make of all those images, the werewolf isn't just standing there idly. He's gonna do everything he can to stomp you out of existence.

So, instead of trying to see from that many perspectives and think rationally, it's best to make leader and drone bodies. The leaders are the ones who tell the rest of the



bodies what to do. They are also the ones that hold the sum of your memories and consciousness. You can make as many leaders as you want, but about ten perspectives is the best most of us can manage to take in at the same time and still function. Ten isn't that many, but they still have complete control over the Crawlerlings. They can still tell the mass of spiders which way to go and what to do. That means you can send half of your body to go attack the big bad wolf and the other half running for cover if you so desire. Or, you can be smart and get the hell out of there. Why? Because ten of your bodies hold the sum of everything you are, every memory you have and every decision you've ever made. Lose one of those ten, and you've just lost a tenth of you. One tenth of your life and memories goes straight down the tubes if that spider gets crushed. When you reform into any of your other shapes, you'll notice the difference, believe me. I've been there, and it hurts in a way you can't hope to understand.

We are not an overly emotional people, but when you look at the world with a fraction of your self-awareness and memories extinguished, it's like losing your closest friend in the world. Do you remember the smile on your mother's face when you were a child? Do you remember how it felt when you were still a toddler and she picked you up and held you and comforted you after you'd scraped your knee or cut your finger on a razorblade you were stupid enough to want to hold? Do you remember the first time a lover gave you a kiss? The first time you impressed your best friend by doing something she couldn't? Yes? Would you like to keep those memories and cherish them, even as much as you're capable of doing so? Then you'll understand what I mean when I say those memories are fragile, and they can be crushed under the heel on a stranger's foot if you aren't careful. I don't know anything about what I was doing from the time I was 29 through the time I reached the age of 50. Why? Because I was careless. I've been told by brethren I can trust that I had a husband, and I've been introduced to my children, but I have no recollection of what my husband might have been like, and I can't recall my children's first steps, or what sort of ice cream

they liked best
when they
were un-



der my roof. There is an emptiness where that part of my life was, and not even echoes of what filled that emptiness are available for me to examine. Be careful... just for the sake of your own sanity, be careful.

Well, now that we've discussed that little mess, let's move on, shall we?

Ten seems the safest limit, and the wisest number of leaders to have in the Crawlerling. More than that and you risk disorientation, less than that and you lose even more of your self if one of them gets hurt or destroyed.

But there are times when you need only one leader. When you feel that you are going to lose, it's best to get a few spiders out of the area and then beat a hasty retreat. Do not bother to collect your belongings or your friends, because you don't have the time. You have to get yourself a new body mass as quickly as you can. Why? Because you need to survive.

That's the basics. You'll learn more as time goes on, but there's one more question you might want answered....

The Microcosm

The students absorbed what she'd said, thinking over the possibilities, the risks and the advantages of the different shapes. Much of what their instructor had told them wasn't exactly new, but was at least put into perspective.

She smiled at them, a strange expression that seemed one part pleasure and two parts promises of pleasure. "Look at our visitor, won't you? Some of you know him, have fed on him, and now you get to see his final fate."

The students turned to look at the Nuwisha they'd caught in their midst over a full week earlier. The pathetic creature was staring slack-jawed at the ceiling of the caves, which seemed miles and miles above their heads. A thick line of drool spilled down from the corners of his mouth, pooling at the base of his skull. Aside from an occasional twitch, there was no other motion.

"Just in case any of you are wondering about the potential immortality we've been discussing, I felt a demonstration might be in order. Enjoy the sight, because it's something you'll ever see second hand. We don't bring demo models with us to these classes, but in this case our guest took the liberty of inviting himself. Yesterday we had a student who decided it was all right to break the rules we established for you all. What remains of him was placed on our guest when I went over to pet him. While you were all listening politely, for which I thank you, that single spider took the time to start eating the werecoyote's brain. In a few hours, he'll be back to full size, but probably not with all of his memories intact. Instinct might have saved him, but there isn't any way to know just yet. If he proves self sufficient, we will continue his training and forgive him this one transgression of the rules. If he is nothing but a drooling idiot, well, then we shall share in a feast when everything is done. Time will tell. In the meanwhile, we have much to discuss. Eyes on me, please.

She gathered the students together again, making certain they paid attention to her words.

We've discussed using the Crawlerling as a method of survival, but we haven't covered everything just yet. So

Ananasi

what happens if we decide to spread our consciousness throughout the entire mass of Crawlerlings anyway? Well, in some cases, it means death. That confusion will get you killed in a conflict situation. But in most cases, it means rest.

What do I mean? I mean that there are times when the stress of what we do can become almost debilitating. Some of us decide to live in the human world exclusively for a time, but it seldom works out. Humans ask too many questions, try to involve themselves in our lives in too many ways. Sometimes it works out; take, for example, the decade I spent as a happy little housewife in suburbia. I don't remember it, for the reasons we've already discussed, but I've been told I was very happy. We don't have any fancy names for these rest periods. I've heard them called downtime, waking slumber and even recess, but almost all of us do it at least once. I've always preferred to think of these rest breaks as getting back to nature.

When you expand your consciousness throughout the Crawlerlings, the world gets a little diffused. It's hard to maintain focus in this form, but it's easy to rely on instinct and cunning. Let me translate that for you. That means you basically become a mass of spiders, and revert to what some of us were from the very beginning, natural hunters in a natural environment. Back to basics for a while, and recovering from the stress. Ananasa not only permits this, but occasionally encourages it. She knows that we work hard, she wants us to be happy. There is a rite you may learn before you leave here, a simple rite that works like an alarm clock. After a certain amount of time dwelling in the wilds, it will go off, and you will be awakened. Your body mass will reform itself and you'll go back to what you were before the vacation became a necessity. This too is Ananasa's gift to us. None of the other Ovid can so completely step away from their lives and simply exist. Believe me, it's very therapeutic.

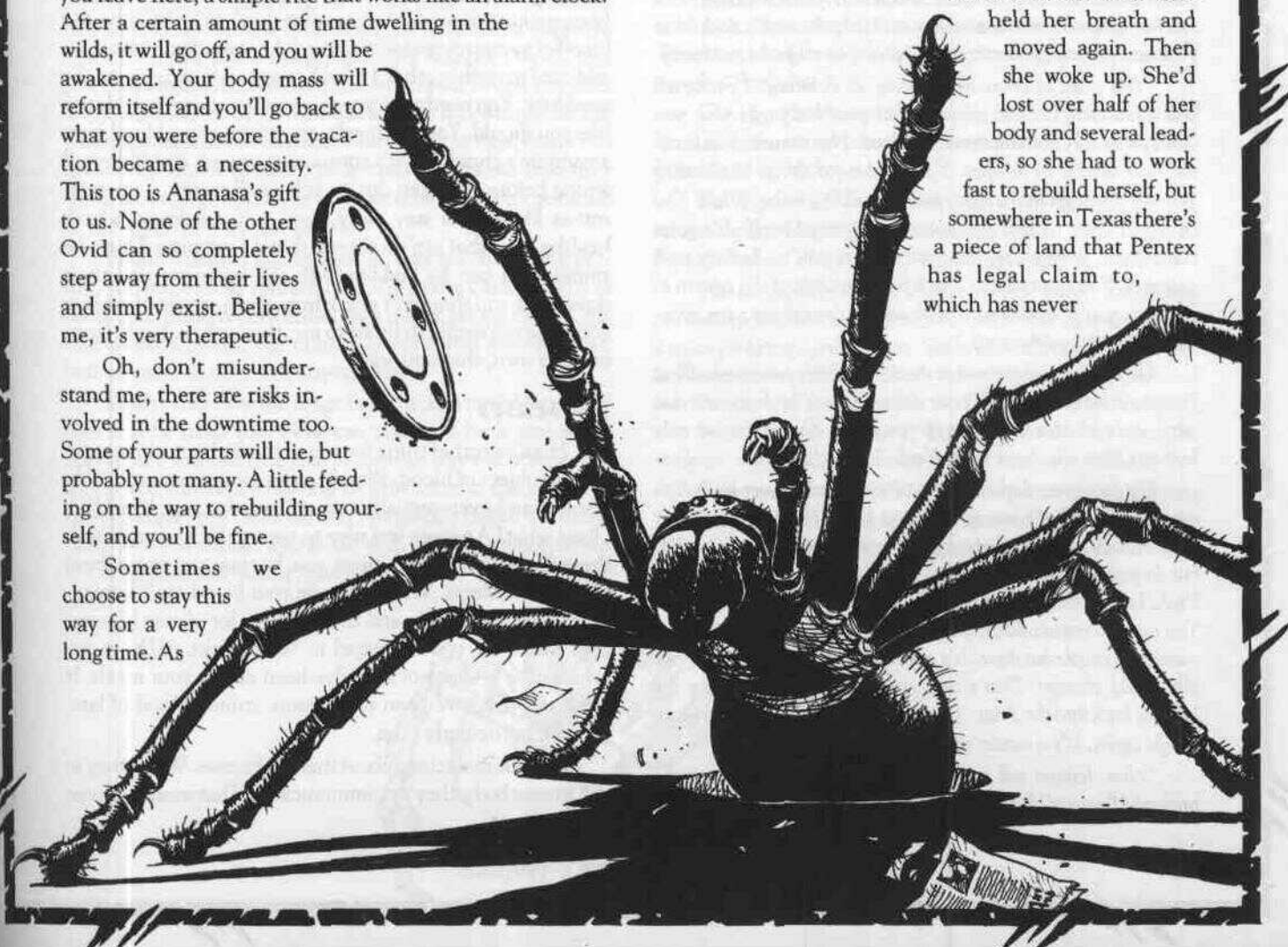
Oh, don't misunderstand me, there are risks involved in the downtime too. Some of your parts will die, but probably not many. A little feeding on the way to rebuilding yourself, and you'll be fine.

Sometimes we choose to stay this way for a very long time. As

a matter of fact, I'll let you in on a secret: there are some of us who've remained in downtime for years. It's one of those little things the other Ovid don't really understand. They don't encounter us often because we are solitary. But they also don't see us on many occasions because we are spread over a few acres of pasture, minding our own business and doing our own thing. Easily half of our population is in downtime at any given time, unless Ananasa demands otherwise. That's the other thing that can wake you from your vacation. The Mother-Queen can summon you to reform in a moment, and there is no resisting that summons. Whether you might wish to remain as a collection of spiders for the rest of eternity or you prefer to stay there for a few weeks, when Queen Ananasa calls, your body will respond.

Another question? Well, if you must. Oh, I see your point. What happens if your bodies find themselves in an inhospitable area... Well, that's another one of those things you can chalk up to instinct of the kindness of the Mother-Queen. Your parts will either move away from the danger zone on their own or they will fight back. It depends on the situation. In one case I know of, a Damhàn was minding her own business when Pentex decided to clear the land and build a toxic dump where she'd chosen to rest. Step one for Pentex was tearing away all of the greenery and replacing it with concrete. She moved out of the way. Step two was spraying the area with poisons, to kill anything that might

still be in the area. She held her breath and moved again. Then she woke up. She'd lost over half of her body and several leaders, so she had to work fast to rebuild herself, but somewhere in Texas there's a piece of land that Pentex has legal claim to, which has never



been finished. After the second work crew ended up covered in incurable spider bites — the nasty sort that eat away flesh over the course of a few years and make dying very painful for humans — they gave up in disgust and relocated a few miles further down the road. She claims she only remembers a little of it, she was still on her vacation when it happened. But she did enjoy the experience. Killing great quantities of humans in service to the Wyrms and making them suffer is a special treat for most of the Kumoti. No offense to the Hatar among you, of course.

The microcosm that becomes your world doesn't need your full human mental faculties, it's a world that runs on instincts. When you give up your mind for the chance to rest, your instincts and the occasional aid from Ananasa are quite capable of handling the matter. If they aren't, and if whatever assaults you isn't as fast as a napalm strike, you'll wake up earlier than anticipated. The odds are good that whatever woke you will be in for an unpleasant surprise.

Oh, look! Our wayward sibling is waking up. See how the drooling stopped? See how the motor functions are returning, and his breathing is getting a bit more regular? No special treat, not just yet. First we have to see if he remembers who he is, and what happened to him.

Living Under the Ananasi Philosophy

Christy stepped away from her students, yielding the floor to a man dressed in blue jeans and a muscle shirt. His hair was jet black and his features were Mediterranean. He spoke with a thick New York accent, and spoke very quickly, as if he might be in a hurry.

"You want to know about being an Ananasi? Lemme tell you a few things. First, despite what your body tells you, you don't physically need mammalian blood. Not to survive at least. But you need it to prosper. You need it for things like healing yourself if you get into a fight, and for building webs. What? You thought maybe all that silk just manufactured itself? It's gotta come from somewhere, especially when you're dealing with quantity. You want to spin a web from one side of this cavern to the next, you're talking a lot of blood. You're talking a ten-year-old kid's worth of the stuff."

He stopped and grinned at them, his white, even teeth all but flashing in his dark skin. "Pretty sick when you think about it that way, ain't it? Not that most of you give a damn, they're only humans after all. Am I right? Yeah, I thought so."

His face grew darker, and his brow lowered over his bullish eyes. "Well, what's wrong with you people?! They're still our Kinfolk! You might not feel as close to your family as you once did, but do you want me to knock on your door and suck 'em all dry? Yeah, I didn't think you was that sick. Lemme tell you something. You want to respect the blood supplies we have. There's a limited number of people out there. It's a pretty big number right now, but that could change! That's why we're working on putting the balance back into the Triat. They screwed up, now we gotta make it right again. It's a matter of self-preservation."

"Now lemme tell you something else. Humans are the preferred flavor of blood, 'cause Ananasa wanted it that way, but

any warm-blooded creature will do in a pinch. Dogs, cats, wolves, parakeets. Whatever it takes to get you through the night, if you know what I mean. I guess maybe the human stuff tastes better 'cause the Mother-Queen—" (here a few winced at the new speaker's pronunciation of "Muddah-Queen") "—wants us to remember where we came from and what we are now. It don't matter, that's just the way it is, get it?"

He walked down into the mass of students, looking over each one of them with contemptuous eyes. "I don't want any of you thinking we gotta kill the ones we feed on, neither. That's just stupid. You take what you need, and you let 'em heal. How can you leave 'em alive? Well, there's that whole Crawlerling thing for one. Sneak in while they're asleep, drink your fill, get outta town. For another, it's amazing what these little pedipalps can do damage-wise. An as an added bonus, they heal the wounds when they're done makin' 'em. It's a great way to avoid getting accused of being a vampire."

An' that brings me to another thing about blood. What? I gotta lotta things to tell you about blood, so get over it! Some of youse are gonna get the bright idea to try drinking vampire blood once you been around 'em for a while. You'll see 'em feed it to their little slaves, the ones they call ghouls, like they got any room to talk, and then you'll maybe hear a ghoul or two talkin' about how nice that blood feels when it gets into their systems. Knock yourself out. Have a party. But it ain't gonna work. Your body won't accept vampire blood. It'll just come right back up, like you been sucking down bleach or somethin'. Why? 'Cause the blood of vampires is addictive, and Ananasa don't want you addicted to nuthin', that's why. You get addicted, you might need a fix. You need a fix, you might not perform your duties like you should. You can maybe try getting some blood from a vampire's ghoul, but it's gonna taste wrong, and it'll smell wrong before you even dip in. It'll smell rotten. You smell rotten blood, you stay away from it if you know what's healthy. No, that ain't a threat, that's a warning. Don't be stupid. You can be buddies with the vampires and their slaves, but you shouldn't drink from them. Some of you are gonna be too stupid to listen to me, that's okay. You'll learn on your own, the hard way.

Diseases

Here's another thing for you to think about, since we're on the subject of blood. Blood carries some nasty stuff in it, diseases and even sexually transmitted diseases, like HIV. Guess what? Ananasa was nice to you again. You can catch these illnesses, they can injure you, but you can purge them from your systems. Why? Because your blood ain't human. It's human and spider, and that means a lot of crap humans get stuck with, you can expel it. We can get AIDs, it can even kill us — but not if you've been eating your meals. It does help if you've been eatin' more animal blood of late, though, particularly bugs.

Oh, one more thing about them sicknesses. While they're still in your body, they're communicable. That means you can

pass them on to other people. Satisfied, wise guy? See, I can speak them big words if I want to. You ain't so smart.

Now, we gotta move on to some serious stuff. We're moving on to the ways the universe works, as far as the Viskr are concerned.

Medications

So, we don't have to worry too much about diseases, even the really nasty ones, but that don't mean you're off the hook. Do you have any idea how much crap people will put into their systems for fun? Forget fun, how many pills and enzymes they take to stay alive? A lot of it won't hurt you, but there are exceptions. Take blood thinners for example, stuff like they give heart patients to keep 'em going. Some of that stuff'll mess you over in a big way. Remember what Christy said about our muscles being hydraulic when we ain't human? Well, try building enough pressure when you drink the wrong person, and you'll find out them hydraulics ain't making you any stronger, they're just crippling you.

If that ain't enough, there's the people out there with diabetes. They can be a good meal, if their blood-glucose level is high. Nice and sweet, like a cheap wine. If it's low, or if the insulin they have to take to stay alive is working in their blood when you drink 'em, you might find a whole new way to get in trouble. Your blood sugars go too low, and you might discover you can't think so good, or you might just pass out. Or you might go into a coma for a little while, until your body can compensate for the drop in sugars. Before that happens, you're sweating like a stuck pig on the butcher's block, and you get to figure out how to think when your neural impulses are going crazy. Some of the Ananasi I've met who drank the wrong diabetic have even discovered that low sugars can even drive the calmest spiders a little crazy. Outta the blue they think they can go as crazy as a Garou, only they don't get none of the benefits, they just get hurt.

Hallucinations and agitation. You get the wrong person, you might find yourself on a trip to the Outer Limits as far as your mind is concerned. We might get off easy in the disease department, but tainted blood is still gonna fry our brains, same as they will anyone else's.

Lastly, there's some drugs that thicken your blood, and they can be nasty too. How can you fight back against an opponent if you can't use your blood the way you're supposed to, on account of it's moving in slow motion through your body? Simple, you can't. So don't go getting stupid out there, make sure you choose who to eat with a little common sense. Don't go after the elderly, cause most of 'em are too far gone

on drugs to do you any good. Between the heart problems, the liver problems, the kidney problems and the constipation, they're on enough junk to make your pulse race and your bowels scream. It ain't all the elderly, but a strong enough number to get you into some embarrassing situations. Oh, and before I forget, stay the heck away from the junkies. Who knows what they've been eating, or what it'll do to you?

The lectures ended eventually. Long before they'd heard everything their teachers had to say, the majority of the Ananasi present had begun studying the Nuwisha. Curiosity is a powerful and sometimes distracting emotion that most of them still suffered from to one degree or another. Most of the spiderlings gathered around the twitching remains of the Nuwisha, curious to see what remained of the foolish member of their family who'd earlier broken the rules. Would he still know his own name? Would he be able to recall what his past had been like before the First Metamorphosis? Only time would tell, and that time was finally here.

Through the last few hours they'd surreptitiously watched as their unexpected guest shuddered and twitched, whined and drooled. Observed with cool, clinical eyes as he changed, losing whatever thoughts he'd once had, and continued their vigil even through their lessons, curious as to exactly what would come out of the loss of one mind and seating of a new one. Perhaps a few of them wanted to make sounds or fidget at they waited, but most stood frightfully still, silent and calm. They were, after all, the Patient Ones.

When he finally opened his eyes, they saw the light of sanity in his face. They saw the calm, collected reason working quickly. Then they heard the words that came from the Native America's mouth. "Fooled us..."

Christy, the old mind in the young body who'd told them of life outside the sacred caves, was the first to speak to the reborn Damhàn. "What do you mean?"

He responded, his voice scratchy from the long days of screaming and laughing that had passed earlier. "He fooled us. Fooled all of us. This body, it's not a werecoyote. It's Ananasi."

The werespiders are not known for their anger. But finding out that one who was not of them had been in their sacred caves was a cause for losing a few tempers. Spiders boiled from human bodies and scoured every crevice. Every inch of the caves was examined over the course of the next week. No sign of their unwanted guest was found, save for an empty, dried skin: the skin of one of the students, a girl who'd been very curious, and very studious.

Vengeance was formally sworn against the interloping Nuwisha, of course. Even so, from that evening on to this, not one of the Damhàn has managed to capture the elusive Coyote-child.





Chapter Four: Metamorphosis



*If this be magic, let it be an art
Lawful as eating.*

— William Shakespeare, *A Winter's Tale*, V.iii.

Much of what the Ananasi have to say about themselves is, not surprisingly, biased. It would be decidedly difficult to get a completely accurate estimation of their true skills by listening to them — they're somewhat egotistical, and certainly canny enough to omit any mention of their real weaknesses.

And Now, the Basics:

Even if you're already pretty used to the Ananasi as portrayed in the *Werewolf Players Guide*, the previous chapters have probably tipped you off that there's a lot more to the werespiders. A few rules have been changed from one book to the next; there are also new additions to flesh out the Ananasi. That said, it's still by and large character creation by the *Werewolf* rules; nothing too difficult to get used to. We hope.

Character Creation

• Step One: Character Concept

Choose concept, breed, Triat affiliation and aspect (Myrmidon, Viskr or Wyrsta).

• Step Two: Select Attributes

Prioritize Physical, Social and Mental Attributes (7/5/3).

• Step Three: Select Abilities

Prioritize Abilities (13/9/5).

• Step Four: Select Advantages

Choose the appropriate Backgrounds (5), Gifts (one general, one faction and one aspect), and Renown (by aspect).

• Step Five: Finishing Touches

Record starting blood pool level (roll one die), Gnosis (by breed), Willpower (by breed) and Rank (1).

Spend freebie points (15), and decide whether or not to choose any Merits or Flaws (if the Storyteller allows them).

Breed

• **Homid:** You grew up in human society, but as you neared the time of the Metamorphosis, you began to realize how unlike your friends and relatives you truly were.

Initial Gnosis: 1

Initial Willpower: 3

• **Arachnid:** You were hatched from an egg sac and compelled to devour thousands of your siblings simply to grow to adolescence. The Metamorphosis introduced you to reason and logic, and you readily took to such things.

Initial Gnosis: 5

Initial Willpower: 4

Aspect

• **Secean (Tenere Myrmidon):** Warrior of the Weaver's faction, you seek understanding of the universe's pattern by analyzing the details around you.

• **Plicare (Tenere Viskr):** Weaver-wizard and shaman, you use your powers to exert a perfect control on your life, and to bring precise order to the world around you.

• **Gaderin (Tenere Wyrsta):** Counter-spinner and challenger of order, you question the interconnectedness of things by amassing extensive collections of subjects.

• **Agere (Hatar Myrmidon):** Destroyer sworn to the Balance Wyrms' purpose, you move quietly and surgically from one target to the next.

• **Anomia (Hatar Viskr):** Balancer of the lost Balance, you fulfill the Wyrms' role of destroyer by manipulating mortals into doing your work for you.

• **Malum (Hatar Wyrsta):** Questioner of the Wyrms' faction, you disdain corruption and anguish in the pursuit of pure, undiluted destruction and entropy.

• **Kar (Kumoti Myrmidon):** Warrior for the Wyld, you manipulate your environment by working changes on the smallest levels.

• **Amari Aliquid (Kumoti Viskr):** Sorcerer of chaos and creativity, you fulfill the Wyld's mandate of constant change with persistent motion and action.

• **Chymos (Kumoti Wyrsta):** Counter-dancer in the Wyld's name, you undercut and fight against the minions of each Triatic spirit as necessary to further your plans for the Wyld.

Backgrounds

Ananasi may choose from Allies, Contacts, Fetish, Kinfolk, Mentor, Resources and Rites. All Ananasi have Queen Ananasa as their totem for free. Arachnid breed werespiders cannot purchase Contacts or Resources, save with freebie points.

Freebie Points

Trait	Cost
Attributes	5 per dot
Abilities	2 per dot
Backgrounds	1 per dot
Gifts	7 per Gift (Level One only)
Gnosis	2 per dot
Willpower	1 per dot

Backgrounds

Most of the Backgrounds used in **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** are usable by Ananasi. Of course, there are exceptions.

No Ananasi may have Past Life or Pure Breed as a Background. Ananasa doesn't want the werespiders to dwell on the past, and so refuses them access to ancestral memories. It is also virtually impossible for an Ananasi to have Pure Breed because they take what they need from human and spider societies alike — be that food or flesh.

Other Backgrounds are usable by all of the Ananasi with the following exceptions: No spider-born Ananasi may start the game with Contacts, or Resources. Similarly, the Ananasi have no choice of totem — they all begin play with Queen Ananasa as their totem.

Queen Ananasa (Totem of Wisdom)

Background Cost: Free (5 for non-Ananasi)

Though still in Malfeas, Ananasa remains quite active when it comes to the welfare of her children. Damhàn feel



her touch on them every day of their lives. Ananasa sometimes takes other Ovid as adopted children, but this is exceptionally rare (and never a possibility for Corax). She is most likely to favor Uktena, Bagheera, Bubasti and Mokolé in such a fashion.

Traits: Ananasa grants her children Occult +3 and Enigmas +2; however, a werespider can fully capitalize on this gift only while meditating in his Sylie. Other Ovid must be alone when calling on either trait. In addition, Ananasa remains ever mindful of her children's actions, and is more active than most totems in advising the elders among her chosen (in this case, Ananasi only).

Ban: Ananasi must obey the laws of their "Litany" as holy writ. Deliberate violation is cause for Ananasa to withdraw her guidance; repeated offenses draw graver punishment. Her children among the other Ovid must cooperate with Ananasi when asked, and are forbidden to leap into a situation without at least one fall-back option.

Peculiarities

Obviously, the Ananasi don't behave much like werewolves, psychologically or physiologically. The most notable gifts (and curses) of the Spider Breed are discussed below.

Blood Pool

Instead of fueling their powers with Rage, as the Garou do, the Ananasi are able to gain power from the blood they drink. These reserves of power are represented by the trait of "blood points," which are measured as a blood pool. All Ananasi have a maximum blood pool of 10, unless they have certain Gifts which permit them to absorb more blood. Ananasi cannot spend blood points and Gnosis in the same turn, except as required for certain Gifts.

- A werespider may spend a blood point to automatically shift into the form of his choice.
- An Ananasi can spend one blood point to gain an extra action in a turn.
- Ananasi heal by expending blood (see *Healing*, below).
- Werespiders use blood points to fuel their webmaking abilities (see *Webs*, below).
- Certain Gifts and rites require the expenditure of blood points.

Ananasi are limited to the expenditure of *one* blood point per turn for any purpose, unless they have special compensatory Gifts. The process of metabolizing their liquid meals isn't as swift as the expenditure of Rage. The average human can provide up to ten blood points before he's drained completely dry, but most creatures can lose only 20 percent of their blood before their lives are endangered. Taking five blood points from a human will hospitalize him, and more will certainly kill him.

Unlike the vampires they often associate with, the Ananasi cannot naturally use their blood pools to increase Physical Attributes. Also, despite enjoying the flavor of Ovid blood, the Ananasi do not gain any special bonuses for drinking the blood of other Changing Breeds.

Healing

Although Ananasi crafted her children well, she lacked the power to grant them the gift of regeneration. Barring the use of Gifts or fetishes, Ananasi heal as normal humans — except that they can spend blood points to mend their wounds. Each blood point spent heals one level of nonaggravated damage; the werespider must be relatively motionless to do this. To heal a level of aggravated damage more quickly than a human would, the Ananasi must expend five blood points all at once; this takes an entire scene. However, unlike Garou and other shapechangers, Ananasi can use their powers of supernatural healing in Homid form; more specifically, they can spend blood points to heal while in any form save Crawlerling (where they can only heal by using the Gift: Replenishment of the Flesh).

Ananasi can catch and transmit diseases, and can suffer from all the ill effects of a disease. However, a werespider can purge her system of a disease by spending blood. This is generally treated like healing aggravated damage, and the severity of the disease determines how much healing is required; for instance, an Ananasi purging herself of the flu would have to heal the equivalent of one aggravated health level, while a werespider who'd contracted AIDS or leprosy might need to heal three to five aggravated health levels' worth of damage. Needless to say, it helps to drink lots of fluids.

Multiple Eyes

In most of their forms the Ananasi have many eyes from which to see. And it's true, especially of the human-born werespiders, that they aren't always used to seeing from extra eyes. While they might have the best peripheral vision in the World of Darkness, they still have to actually look at what they are seeing. Just because something is in their field of vision doesn't mean they've actually taken notice of it. For that reason, even Ananasi must make Perception rolls in order to notice something off to the side. Additionally, unless they have certain Gifts, they do not automatically see in 360 degrees at once.

Multiple Limbs

The Ananasi have more limbs than other Ovid, but that doesn't mean they automatically get extra actions or a reduced penalty on taking extra actions. It just means they have more arms and legs. The werespiders suffer the exact same penalties for taking extra actions as everyone else does, unless they have Gifts to compensate for the differences. Mind you, it never hurts to have a few extra hands for carrying weapons, or in case one gets torn off by an irate Garou.

Rage and Primal-Urge

The Ananasi do not have Rage; they are largely unemotional, and certainly incapable of the supernatural fury that is Rage. They still feel sorrow and grief, anger and lust, but for them these feelings are muted and weak at best. Emotion is a luxury, and one they can ill afford. Rage is a by-product — or distillation of — emotion, and simply cannot be a part of the Ananasi makeup. This doesn't mean that the Ananasi

are weaker than other Ovid; they don't work the same way. In order to produce similar effects within their own bodies, the werespiders must consume warm, mammalian blood.

To shapeshift, Ananasi roll Stamina + Primal-Urge, just as any other shapeshifter would. The ability to change shapes is not affected by their lack of Rage in any way, shape or form. As an additional by-product of their unemotional state, the Ananasi cannot frenzy unless it is supernaturally induced (and even then, the difficulty to do so is raised by 2).

Forms		
Lilian	Pithus	Crawlerling
Str: +3	Str: +4	Str: 0
Dex: +3	Dex: +2	Dex: +6
Sta: +2	Sta: +3	Sta: 0
Man: -1	Man: -3	Man: 0
App: -1	App: -2	App: 0
Str +1 Bite	Str + 3 Bite	
Claw +2	Claw +2	
Diff: 6	Diff: 7	Diff: 6

Optionally, the Storyteller may choose to have the physical size differences between male and female Ananasi reflected in their form statistics; males would be lighter and substantially faster in reaction time than females. If so, males would have Lilian and Pithus forms with the following modifiers:

Lilian	Pithus
Str: +2	Str: +3
Dex: +4	Dex: +3
Sta: +2	Sta: +3
App: -1	App: -2
Man: -1	Man: -3
Diff: 6	Diff: 7
Str: +1 Bite	Str: + 3 Bite
Claw +2	Claw +2

Remember that all Ananasi cause the Delirium in both Lilian and Pithus forms, at full strength.

Renown

Ananasi rise in rank by acquiring Renown, much as any other shapeshifter does. The process is described in detail in Chapter Two, but the actual Renown requirements for each rank are listed here.

Perhaps due to their distaste for relying too much on names, the Ananasi have no actual titles for their various ranks. A Damhàn's rank is obvious to the others of her race; the patterning described in Chapter Two is all the honorific an Ananasi requires.

Sex Appeal

Despite their lack of Rage, Ananasi are very predatory, very compelling creatures. They are able to use their preda-

Ananasi Renown

Tenere

Rank	Cunning	Obedience	Wisdom
1	0	3	0
2	1	5	1
3	3	7	4
4	4	9	6
5	6	10	7

Hatar

Rank	Cunning	Obedience	Wisdom
1	3	0	0
2	5	1	1
3	7	4	3
4	9	6	4
5	10	7	6

Kumoti

Rank	Cunning	Obedience	Wisdom
1	0	0	3
2	1	1	5
3	4	3	7
4	6	4	9
5	7	6	10

tory nature (and even a healthy dose of pheromones) to best advantage, attracting members of the opposite sex for both mating and feeding. In game terms, they are able to use the Animal Attraction rules (*Werewolf*, pg. 218) by rolling Charisma + Primal-Urge — the only difference is that where a werewolf's difficulty is his own Rage, an Ananasi uses a flat difficulty of 4.

Silver

The Ananasi, lacking Rage, suffer no particular vulnerability to silver. They can soak damage from silver weapons as usual, and can handle silver without harm. They have no supernatural allergies as such, despite the rumors of their allergy to pesticides. (Of course, a werespider will still take aggravated damage from a klaive's wounds, but that's due to the klaive's mystical power and not to the material from which it was forged.)

Umbral Travel

The Ananasi do not travel to the Umbra in the same way as other Ovid. Rather than finding a spot where the Gauntlet is weak enough and staring into their reflections, the Damhàn must assume the Crawlerling form and quite literally crawl between the strands of the Great Web. Once they have entered the Umbra, the werespiders may once again assume any form they desire, but for the Ananasi there is no other way to reach the spirit realms.



The difficulty for entering the Umbra depends on the strength of the Gauntlet, but inversely so; places where the Wyld is still prevalent actually cause the werespiders more trouble than places where the Weaver is strong. The Great Web is their only way of gaining access to the Umbra, and where the strands of that Web are fewer, it is more difficult to enter the spirit world.

Area	Difficulty
Science lab	3
Inner city	4
Mini-mall	5
Open highway	6
Rural countryside	7
Lonely train track	8
Untouched wilderness	10

The exception is that places where the Wyrms are strongest, whether those of low or high Gauntlet, cause greater troubles for the Damhàn. In such places, the corruption along the Great Web is sticky and difficult to navigate (except for the Hatar, who have a natural affinity for the Wyrms' places of power). In such places, non-Hatar Ananasi are at +2 difficulty to "crawl sideways."

Venom

Just like their spider kin, the Damhàn have special glands which produce venom. The venom can be quite powerful, depending on the Ananasi's form, but the werespiders must use Gifts

in order to make their venom strong enough to affect shapeshifters or the undead. The neurotoxins they produce have very detrimental affects on most humans and other creatures; just how serious the results of one of their bites may be is left to the discretion of the Storyteller, but a human bitten by a Pithus is almost certainly dead or paralyzed for hours. The Ananasi can inject full-strength venom while in Pithus and a diluted version while in Lilian.

The exact nature of the venom of each Ananasi is a result of the type of spiders which are a part of the werespider. Tarantulas produce a very painful venom that is seldom lethal, but causes paralysis. Brown recluse spiders produce a necrotizing toxin that will spread through a body over days or weeks (in the case of a single spider biting a human sized target) and kill all flesh it encounters. The bite of a single black widow can cause death in a human-sized opponent, though more often just causes illness. However, without the use of Gifts, the Ananasi have only enough venom for two or three good solid injections; they simply aren't designed to inject venom from sunup to sundown.

Webs

Ananasi in Pithus form can spin very strong, very durable webs. Creating webs on any substantial level (say, the amount needed to close off a narrow alleyway's entrance or fill a small closet) costs one blood point, as the Ananasi's body breaks down the blood to replenish the natural polymers which create the webbing.



The tensile strength of the webs is about the same as steel cables, but more flexible. If the webs are used to snare an opponent, the target must break the webs to escape. These webs resist Strength rolls with an effective Strength of 9, and can take four effective health levels before being broken.

Ananasi in Crawlerling form can also spin webs, but these webs are no stronger than an ordinary spider's (or rather, the webs of a thousand or so ordinary spiders).

Aspects

The Ananasi do not have auspices, they have aspects. The aspects are a way of life and a philosophy; they are also an integral part of each Damhàn's mental makeup. Each faction, Weaver, Wyrn and Wyld of the Triumvirate has three aspects beneath the larger banner of political choices. Each aspect serves a specific purpose as a Warrior, a Balancer or a Questioner. Warriors fight for the Triat Member they follow, but they do so under the direction of Ananasa. Balancers work as judges of the Triat, seeking to find the best way to restore the Symmetry that is missing from the Great Web, and Questioners seek to understand the member of the Triat they allegedly follow. In truth, Questioners are just as likely to work against their faction as they are to work with it, as part of their duty is to fully understand the nature of their particular faction and that faction's symbolic "leader." (The true leader in the eyes of all Ananasi is Queen Ananasa, but the symbolic leader of each faction is the Weaver, the Wyrn or the Wyld.)

The aspects are not designed to get along well. That's never been their reason for existing. They are designed to achieve very specific goals, and if those goals bring them into conflict with each other, they accept the confrontations as an inevitable part of life. Most Ananasi believe that the Mother-Queen sees through their eyes, and that her purpose behind dividing the species into the nine aspects has to do with fully understanding what each member of the Triat is doing, and how each member impacts the universe and the Gaia Realm.

The Aspects' Organization

Each aspect serves a purpose, but it is sometimes difficult to understand exactly what that purpose might be. Queen Ananasa has not clarified perfectly what each duty entails, but rather informs the Ananasi of what they must accomplish instead. The aspects are as much a way of life as they are a set of orders. For the Ananasi, the aspects are examples of what they are, not what they should be.

What the Damhàn are is directly connected to the aspect they are given by Ananasa. They do not choose their aspects; rather, Ananasi are chosen by them. The markings of the Tenere, Hatar and Kumoti appear shortly after the Metamorphosis; the calling of Myrmidon, Viskr or Wyrsta is given during the werespider's Umbral instruction. Any elder Ananasi available are willing to explain the nature of the young one's new duties, but instinct is usually sufficient to guide the spiderling along its appointed tasks.

The Ananasi cannot change their aspects. If they are not content with what they are, they can't simply decide to be something different. This is their curse; they are what they are, and nothing they do can change that simple fact.

The following social notes on the various aspects are more roleplaying suggestions than anything else; as each Ananasi must guess how best to serve his aspect, players don't have to worry about behaving in only the "right" manner. There are many, many ways to interpret the intersection of a Triatic spirit's essence and the task of Warrior, Balancer or Questioner. Those that follow are far from the only viable options; they are simply examples of the alien behavior in which the Ananasi indulge, and the inscrutable reasoning behind such behavior.

Tenere: Under the Weaver

The Tenere believe in structure, order and precision. They are the most logical and calculating of the Damhàn, and they take their tasks very seriously. Where the other Ananasi might allow emotion to get in their way, the Tenere are almost beyond emotional ties. There is no compassion in the order of the universe, and there is no hatred in maintaining the ways of the Weaver. However, it must be emphasized that the Tenere do not follow the Weaver as she is, but rather as she was meant to be. While they can get almost fanatical about keeping everything orderly, they strive to prevent their need for pattern and balance from affecting their emotional and mental stability. Should the waves at the beach destroy their perfect sand castle, they simply build again, a little further from the water's edge, rather than trying to blame the ocean for doing what it was designed to do.

The Tenere are the Ananasi with the neatest homes, the most geometrically perfect webs and the best eyes for detail. They are the most likely to be repeatedly punctual, even obsessively so. The Plicare, for example, normally map out their entire daily routine in their heads, calculating how long it will take them to get where they are going, how long it will take them to eat — and hunt if necessary — and even working out alternate routes and plans to keep them on their schedule. Just as importantly, they're likely to know exactly when a train is due not by the schedule listed but by averaging out when that train normally arrives. They are frighteningly accurate in their assessments.

• Secean — Myrmidon

The Secean are explorers. They seek to understand the nature of the universe, the better to serve their Queen. As with all of the Tenere, they look to the Weaver as their guide, following the ideals that the Weaver once followed before going insane. The Secean seek knowledge of everything, believing that the best way to understand the proverbial big picture is to first understand its components — and they are willing to go to almost any length to find the answers they seek. No secret is sacred, and no door forbidden to open. This often gets the Secean into difficult situations, but then, they like to find the answer to those problems as well.

Nothing is quite as important as the details. Most of the followers of this aspect can look at anything created and tell you what's wrong with it. Think that artist is something special? Ha! He cuts corners on the perspective of his pieces, cheating you with tricks of light to hide the fact that he can't square a building properly. Is he talented? Certainly. Is he accurate? No.

But just as they can see the flaws in almost anything, they can see the strengths in almost any object they run across. Their perceptions do not grant them the automatic ability to know what a target's weak point is; they simply have some insight into the true nature of an object, person or place.

The Secean are opinionated and almost certain to offend — they prefer straight answers to tact. Even so, they are just as harsh with themselves as they are with others. In most cases that means a little criticism and advice; in some cases they might just decide the best remedy for the situation is to simply start from scratch and try to work out the imperfection out as they go — and they can easily classify people as “imperfections.”

Not too surprisingly, the Secean are often artists or statisticians in their mortal forms. A few even become scientists, looking for the details that no else thinks about. Answers are the key to everything, and the Secean are the masters of finding them.

• Plicare — Viskr

Where some of the Damhàn might consider a little revelry now and again not only tolerable, but necessary, the Plicare believe strictly in order. A place for everything, and everything in its place. They are the very definition of anal-retentive behavior. Should someone sneak through the home of a Plicare and use every caution to leave the place undisturbed, the Ananasi would most likely be able to tell that someone had been there anyway. Opening a drawer in their bedroom is likely to disturb a dozen tiny details about the drawer's contents — even more so because Plicare are notorious for setting “traps” wherever they go to let them know if anything has been moved.

The Plicare can tell you exactly how many candies are in their candy jar because they've probably counted them and memorized the number. Yes, they do have all of their books in order — though it might be alphabetical by author, chronological by date of publication, or numerical based on the Library of Congress system, depending upon the werespider in question. Trivialities of organization can lead to huge debates among two Plicare. To the Plicare the idea of anything less than perfect order is offensive. Even so, they grudgingly accept that evolution and a certain level of chaos are necessary for life. If they didn't, they'd have wiped out quite a few of the living beings on the planet on general principle. *Homo sapiens* would have never made it out of the trees. The Plicare tolerate mutation and evolution, just as long as they can understand the cause of that transformation and catalog it properly.

Some people have tried to use the Plicare's need for perfection as a weak spot, only to find that the Weaver-Viskr also have a very rational reaction to change. They don't feel the need to immediately move a vase full of dried flowers back to the exact same location the moment it's knocked over. More

likely, they'll find and punish the one responsible for the gross violation — and then return everything to where it should be.

Like all of the Viskr, the Plicare have a natural affinity for certain Gifts and rites that let them perform actions that almost seem to mimic True Magic. Their connection to these Gifts and rites does limit their access to other Gifts, but the powers that they wield have made their reputation as “wizards.”

Many of the Plicare assume the role of organizers in mortal society. Accountants, comptrollers, and librarians are common occupations.

• Gaderin — Wyrsta

The Gaderin are collectors, in a most disturbing way. The catch is always in what it is they collect. Some might find the greatest treasures hidden in the notes of a symphony, others might strive to gather perfect specimens of every type of butterfly, but most tend to collect treasures of a darker nature.

Gaderin Ananasi are known for their diligence in completing any collection they start, and more likely than not, the only living being who will ever see their treasures and live is the collector herself. Once again the main driving goal in these collections seems to be a desire to see every possible detail of the item's evolution; a chance to see exactly where something started and how it has progressed. “The Tapestry cannot be properly seen if any of the threads are missing” is a popular saying among these Ananasi.

There are those among the Damhàn who believe Ananasa sees through the eyes of her Children. If that is the case, then the Gaderin help her keep perspective from her prison in Malfeas. No two Gaderin ever collect exactly the same things. The closest any come are those who take up gathering a new collection that is similar to one that belonged to a now deceased fellow. Some might be very similar in what they find, sort and categorize, but no two are exactly alike. As an example, one might have a collection of various butterflies, while another might gather examples of every monarch butterfly he can get his hands on. The notion of completing a collection is not merely obsession with the Gaderin, it is an imperative compulsion. Once again, the desire to finish a collection is not enough to make the Ananasi foolhardy: should he be chasing down an enemy and see the object of his desire, he won't stop what he is doing to grab his prize, but he will make a note of where that treasure is and get it later.

It should also be understood that the Gaderin don't limit themselves to collecting items. They are known to collect people as well. Take the case of the Ananasi who goes by the *non de plume* “Christy15,” who has a very sizable collection of sexual predators she's studied carefully, the better to understand what makes them tick. She has cross-referenced their experiences, carefully detailed their lives and the names of their victims, and meticulously studied their internal organs and bones, seeking more knowledge of their aberrant behavior.

Hatar: Under the Wyrm

The Hatar serve Ananasa by serving the Wyrm. The way in which they serve the Corrupter is very similar to the way in

which the Tenere serve the Weaver. They follow the doctrines that the Wymr itself once followed — and if they have their way, it will follow them again. The Hatar are very misunderstood by other Ovid, who find it impossible to believe that the Hatar can follow the Wymr and still achieve the goals of the Ananasi as a whole. (Then again, outsiders are convinced that all Ananasi are by rights children of the Weaver proper.)

To the Hatar way of thinking, the Wymr is not the corrupter, but rather the corrupted. The Wymr is held prisoner just as surely as is the Mother-Queen. The Wymr suffers in the captivity of the Weaver, and must be released from its bonds before it can repair itself and once again resume its proper place in the Triat. In the meantime, the Hatar have taken up the slack, as it were — and there is a great deal of slack to take up as far as they are concerned.

Of all the Ananasi, the Hatar are by far the most aggressive. They seek out their mandated prey with an active gusto, destroying or terrorizing their victims as they see fit. If any of the Ananasi are capable of vile acts in the service of the Triat, it is the Hatar. Oddly, they suffer less from Wymr-corruption (as a general rule) than any of the other Changing Breeds who've fallen to the Wymr, including the Kumo; their allegiance largely remains to Ananasa. They rarely revel in the destruction they cause; they do not seek to destroy anything that crosses their paths, and they have no reason to corrupt others into the service of the Wymr. Like surgeons, gardeners or vigilantes, they seek to destroy what they believe must be eliminated. If that means they hunt down an innocent child and feed on the lifeblood of the youngster, so be it. If that means they must actively work to bring around economic collapse in an area, that too is what they will do. The only rule is simply that they must destroy. That is the purpose that the Wymr once served, and the Hatar still do.

Their role is that of destroyers, but it is not a role that has driven them mad. They are more comparable to a scalpel than to a nuclear bomb. They ruin or kill what they feel must be eliminated for the betterment of all. That often means they make serious enemies, even among minions of the Wymr.

• Agere — Myrmidon

The Agere seldom stay in any one place for long. They move in and out of lives, seeking to make a profound impact and then move to the next victim. They don't particularly enjoy stepping in and ruining lives; they're simply a force of entropy.

Better by far to provoke a conflict than to get stuck in the middle of one: that's the Agere creed. That way, there's less risk of getting hurt and far better chances of finishing the jobs they've been given by Ananasa. They do, however, get involved in their fair share of the action, as they thrive on conflict and the taste of fresh blood. They prefer short, direct actions, quickly accomplished so that they can move on to the next target.

To that end they often find themselves looking at the servants of the Weaver with a skeptical eye and with a sharpened talon. It stands to reason that the Weaver, already too strong and unstable for anyone's good, must be weakened substantially before the Wymr can be freed. The problem,

naturally enough, is trying to find ways to prevent the Weaver's cancerous growth from getting any larger. In a battle where Grandmother Spider has already struck down many of her strongest foes, the Agere must find trustworthy allies who can see things their way. So far they've had no serious success in the recruiting field. And, frankly, they have no problems dealing with their failures — in a horrible, bloody manner.

The Agere are mostly apathetic to the needs of others. Once they have allies, it's for their own needs and purposes. Many times they follow and aid their companions, if for no other reason than to convince their temporary allies to aid them in their own quests. Once the job is done, the Agere will move on to the next conquest. If his former "friend" is left to handle the aftermath, all the easier to pass on to the next task.

They are seemingly the random thoughts of their Queen, always ready to move to the next location that Ananasa wills and strike on her behalf. Ananasa herself has chosen them to do her dirty work — and that is the work of the Wymr. They have the ultimate goal of satisfying two masters, fulfilling both of their needs at the same time, and it leaves them with little personal identity. To most this might seem an insurmountable obstacle. To the Agere, the increased challenges they face simply make the situation all the sweeter. They have no doubt that they will eventually succeed in their goals. Where the other Hatar aspects might feel the need for instant gratification, Agere simply feel the need to see their ultimate goal come to fruition. If that takes lifetimes, as it so often does, then so be it. The Agere serve Ananasa, and that is enough.

• Anomia — Viskr

It could be argued, and not unjustly, that the Weaver is almost as strong an influence on the Anomia as the Wymr is. Where the Agere might strive to excel at mass violence, the Anomia have long since mastered the art of plucking the proper strands of the Web to get a reaction. They are the ones most likely to back terrorist activities with financial aid and even weapons development assistance.

Take a petty dictator in a Third World nation, help him find a sufficiently trustworthy group of lieutenants, and explain to them that drugs and other vices are fabulous ways to generate money. Then introduce them to the sort of fanatics they need to assist them in their darker desires for revenge against major powers — said revenge often being the result of imagined slights — and watch what happens. Convince a group of radicals that their own government or local authority figures plan to destroy them, or that a particular faction of the human race is genetically and morally inferior. After that, paranoia and anger will go a long way to creating a disaster. Convince a charismatic religious leader to start his own crusade against a popular and slightly dubious form of entertainment, and feed the fire when necessary. Whisper rumors of hostile takeovers in the right ears on Wall Street. Arrange for health and safety violations to be ignored in a meat packing plant or by a chain of restaurants. Explain to a group of farmers that certain animals, take wolves as an example, will destroy their livestock if allowed a proper reintroduction into the areas they have

claimed as their own... then step back and watch the nastier side of human nature come into play.

Their plans are sometimes very complex, sometimes almost laughably easy, but the Anomia thrive on the destruction caused when they succeed. It's far more satisfying for the Anomia to watch others cause destruction and know that they are themselves the catalyst for these actions, than it is to actually destroy something with their own limbs. The orchestration of madness and violence is the ultimate goal of these Damhàn, and that is one of the few things that gives them satisfaction. If they have to, they'll be in on the start of the damage, but they are seldom around by the end of it. Better to watch the fireworks from a distance, where it is relatively safe — where the Garou don't suspect just who or what is truly behind the action.

First rule: Always have a scapegoat. *Second rule:* Never leave a job half finished. *Third rule:* Sometimes the best instigator of mob violence is an atrocity. Four men rape a woman—or man—of another race, and there will be consequences. Even the accusation is enough to build tensions in some areas to the point where confrontation is inevitable. The threat of violence — said threat being made at a payphone in the middle of the night — can heighten paranoia to intolerable levels. The trick is not so much in *what* is said but in *how* it is said. Once the masses have been made sensitive to a subject, the op-

portunities for increasing the death toll are enormous. The palette of the human psyche offers plenty of opportunities to create works of excessive force. To the Anomia the world is a canvas merely waiting for the colors to be applied. They consider themselves patrons of the art of death and carnage.

They leave the actual creation of the art to those who are far better equipped to handle it: Humans. And if the subtle hint of corruption tends to cling to those who are just a little less discriminating in their methods—well, that's another reason to keep hidden.

• Malum — Wyrsta

The Malum might give lip service to the ideals of the Wyrn, but as with the Gaderin, they tend more often than not to look upon the Wyrn's works as hopeless mistakes. The Malum stare upon the Wyrn's minions and ask themselves the same question almost every time: "Why handle the dirty work for an entity that is clearly insane? Why not cure the insanity and let the Wyrn get back to its own duties?" To that end they often find themselves in direct opposition to the warped ideals the minions of the Wyrn normally follow.

Does this philosophy mean that they follow the Weaver or the Wyld? Not hardly. They follow their own agenda, a carefully crafted plan to free the Wyrn from the bonds that hold him and, if it all works out properly, restore the Destroyer's true mind. As far as the Malum are concerned, the Wyrn should never have become the Corrupter, he should have remained the Destroyer. They consider their first goal



to be the eradication of anything that strengthens the imprisonment or insanity that keep the Wyrms at bay, and they do that by being true to the idea of destruction.

They are the true definition of destroyers, often seeking conflict with anything that comes in their path, but seldom seeking a physical confrontation. The Malum are, perhaps, not as subtle as most of their brethren, but they are certainly less prone to fisticuffs than the Garou... at least where straightforward attacks are concerned.

In many cases the violence the Malum provoke is exactly the sort one would expect from minions of the Wyrms: mass riots, chaotic terrorist attacks and civil unrest are their specialties. Though they are seldom the actual cause of the situations that explode, the Wyrsta of the Hatar never hesitate to fan the flames of any situation to explosive levels, even under circumstances that seemingly work against the Corrupter, or against the Ananasi themselves. There is a long history of incidents where Pentex was on the receiving end of bad press and ugly encounters with the Garou that could, if one took the time to study the situations carefully, potentially lead a pack or two of angry werewolves to the Ananasi. Sometimes they've tipped the werewolves off to a bad situation; sometimes they've alerted Pentex to the dangers the Garou in an area represent. Exactly who survives these encounters really doesn't matter, as long as there is havoc on both sides. Far more often, however, the Malum work to spread the plague of violence among the human masses. The human populace is, in the eyes of the Malum, easier to provoke and enrage than the more knowledgeable and paranoid Ovid or megacorporations.

All it takes is the right word at the right time, screamed from a crowd, and what was a friendly rugby match can become a bloodbath. An empty can striking the right target at the right moment can lead to emotional conflagrations and millions of dollars in damage. Mind you, not all of their orchestrated affairs are anywhere near as grand. Only the truly lucky or gifted can achieve that sort of success with any regularity. More often it's a matter of letting out the right gossip to turn the masses against a single faction, or to make the appropriate hate group seem responsible for a crime that they likely would have committed anyway.

Unlike the Anomia, the Malum tend to avoid methods that involve long-term erosion of a puppet's morals. Unlike the Agere, they pull strings from afar as often as they get personally involved. And unlike both their fellow Hatar aspects, the Malum care rather less for pain and suffering than they do for outright destruction. They are entropy, pure and simple, and probably the Hatar least in danger of outside corruption.

Kumoti: Under the Wyld

Just as the Wyld is supposed to bring forth change and chaos, so too the Kumoti. This does not mean that the Kumoti follow the same paths as the Garou or other Ovid, however. Nor does it mean that they have become ecoterrorists determined to see an end to civilization, as the humans know it. Violence, as is the case with most of the Damhàn, is a last resort.



Wyld-aspected Ananasi believe that change should, indeed, *must* occur if the world is to avoid stagnation. They do everything they can to make that change happens without being detected. Stealth, patience and an unrelenting determination to give the Great Spirit Gaia a fighting chance are among the most important tools they use. Gaia must be preserved. Without Gaia, there is no home for Ananasa to return to.

Even the most dedicated followers of the Wyld among the Damhàn are still the grandchildren of Weaver. For that reason, they still cannot frenzy and still cannot connect with the Wyld in the same way that most of the Ovid manage easily. They do not and cannot have Rage, no matter how passionate they manage to become. But by studying the Wyld, by carefully examining the natural order, they've come closer than most of their kind ever could.

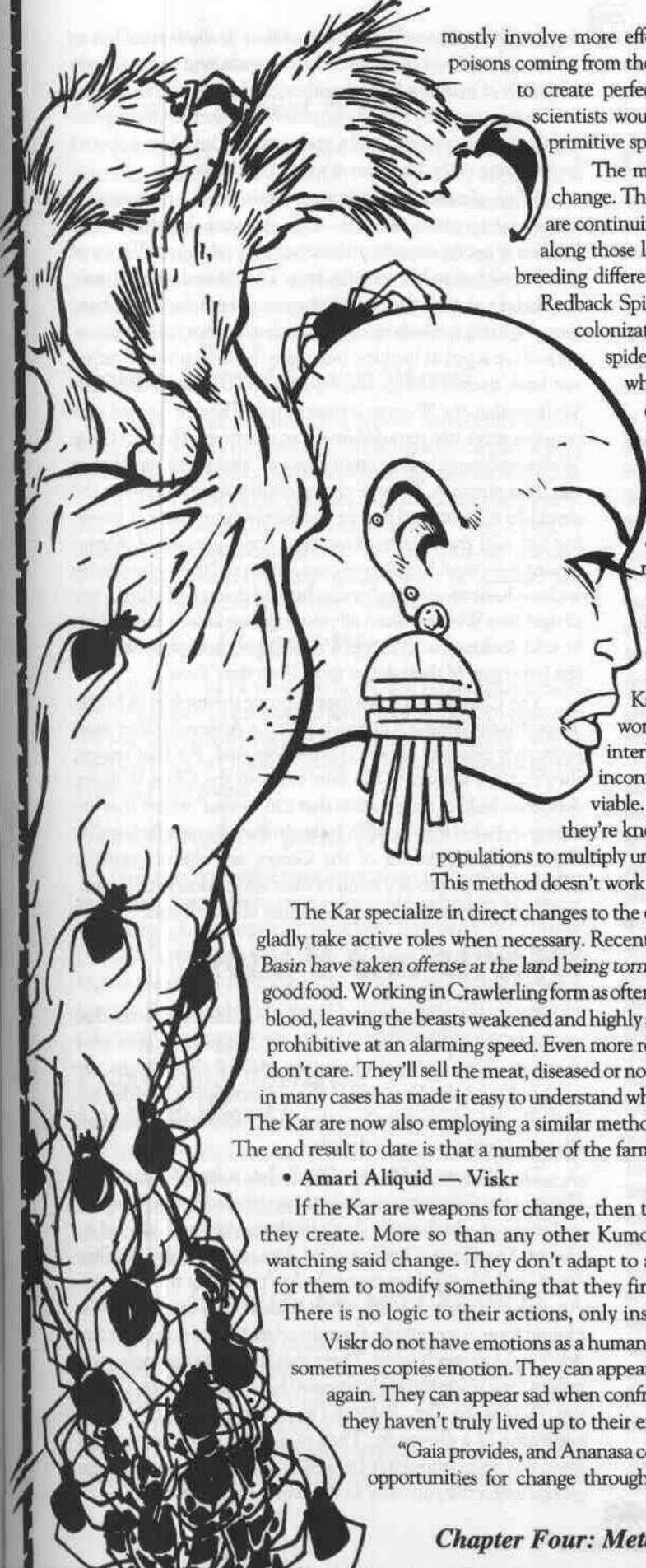
The Wyld, as far as the Ananasi are concerned, is a concept as much as it is an actual entity. They follow what that concept *should be*, not what the entity actually is, just as their brethren follow what the Weaver and the Wyrms *should be*, not what they have become. Stagnation is death, and the Wyrms' grip on reality is strong enough without allowing it any greater hold. Stagnation is also what the Weaver seeks in her madness, an endless void filled with nothing that ever changes. The Kumoti believe in stirring the waters, adding fresh life to the pot and seeing what comes of their actions. Evolution and change are their keywords. They acknowledge that some of the changes might not be for the best in the long run, but maintain that any change, even a detrimental one, is preferable to stasis.

• Kar — Myrmidon

The Kar seek to create, to supplement what Gaia already has by expanding her influence where they can. In some cases, they do this through careful sabotage of the Weaver's tools and plans, but in most cases they manage this task by taking over the spider population in an area. The insect world is a strange place with numerous checks and balances. Despite its connection to the Wyld, the Weaver still has powerful influence on how most insects see, act and thrive. For that reason, the Kar often focus heavily on the insects, and on changing them in small, subtle ways.

To do so, especially without using the Weaver's gift of technology — that's where evolution comes in. Creatures must adapt to their environments to survive. By changing the odds of survival in an area, the Kumoti in turn alter the nature of the changes in the insects that dwell there. Should the feeding become too slim in an area, the ants and other predatory insects must adapt to the changes or perish. The Kar work to make certain those changes occur, for better or worse. More often than not, they make the struggle harder, forcing the insects to break from their routine and often driving them to become more aggressive.

And they don't just do this with insects; they've done it to themselves as well. Scientists have discovered that there are two types of spiders that are predominant in the world: Mygalomorphae, the "primitive spider" and Araneomorphae, the "modern spider." The primary differences are small, but



mostly involve more effective and dangerous types of mandibles and more toxic poisons coming from the fangs of the "modern spider." They are working diligently to create perfect killing machines within the natural order, and most scientists would agree that the modern spider is far deadlier, though the primitive spider is often more aggressive.

The modern spider is, in part, a result of the Kar's need to force change. They effectively forced the evolution of their own species, and are continuing to do so even today. Time will tell what they accomplish along those lines. They have, however, had remarkable success in cross breeding different spiders from different countries. Take for example, the Redback Spider of Australia, which didn't even exist as such until the colonization of the land by Europeans. The sudden emergence of a spider which had never been seen and which thrives in areas where humanity is settled might seem like a natural coincidence to most, but the Kar know better. Before these relatives of the black widow showed themselves, there were no spiders quite like them on the continent. These aggressive, highly venomous spiders have killed many people, over a dozen before the antivenin for their bite was created, and they continue to do so, even though the Ananasi themselves are rather rare in the Land Down Under these days...

The ways in which the Kar affect the Wyld are minor, but significant. Unlike many of their brethren they seldom bother with the human race, fully acknowledging that the humans are already changing themselves almost daily. The Kar are more interested in the world away from the humans, the world that they feel has to be protected. When they find interlopers in their area, they do everything within their power to inconvenience them to the point that staying is simply no longer viable. In areas where farming is trying to get a hold on the land, they're known to simply stop hunting the insects, leaving the massive populations to multiply until the crops of the farmers are the best looking food around. This method doesn't work as well as it used to, primarily because of modern pesticides.

The Kar specialize in direct changes to the environment and in indirect defense of the land, but they'll gladly take active roles when necessary. Recently a large collection of the Kar in and around the Amazon Basin have taken offense at the land being torn apart for the benefit of cattle. Their response? Cattle make good food. Working in Crawlerling form as often as not, they've taken to draining cattle substantially of their blood, leaving the beasts weakened and highly susceptible to disease. The cost of raising the cattle is getting prohibitive at an alarming speed. Even more recently, they've discovered that many of the farmers simply don't care. They'll sell the meat, diseased or not, and make a quick profit. That the farmers work for Pentex in many cases has made it easy to understand why the farmers are so negligent about tainted meat going out. The Kar are now also employing a similar method on the farmers themselves. They grow sick and they die. The end result to date is that a number of the farming families are moving off for better-established pastures.

• Amari Aliquid — Viskr

If the Kar are weapons for change, then the Amari Aliquid are the physicians to heal the wounds they create. More so than any other Kumoti, these spiders seek change for the sheer pleasure of watching said change. They don't adapt to any pattern or design, they simply change. It is common for them to modify something that they find, only to modify it right back to the way it was before. There is no logic to their actions, only instinct.

Viskr do not have emotions as a human understands them, they simply have a response system that sometimes copies emotion. They can appear happy while rearranging a living room, again and again and again. They can appear sad when confronted by tragedy; if a change has been made without them, they haven't truly lived up to their expectations.

"Gaia provides, and Ananasa commands" is a common saying among this aspect. Gaia offers opportunities for change through droughts, bad storms and harsh environments. Ananasa

demands the changes be made, and the Amari Aliquid then make those changes. Be it healing the sick (only to kill them for food) or irrigating a field for crops (only to pave it over as a parking lot), they have a role to fulfill, and are always ready to act.

Of all the Children of Ananasi, the Amari Aliquid are by far the least violent. They are lethal (and unapologetically so) only when the situation requires it. These particular spiderlings are also the most welcome amongst the other factions; outsiders are often entertained by this aspect's actions. While most spiders show quiet patience, these Viskr show persistence, and their constant motion amuses their brethren.

While most Ananasi try to avoid meddling in the affairs of the other Ovid or humans, the Amari Aliquid are drawn to them. They see the constant mistakes that they are making and try to correct them. The wisest of them know to do it from behind the scenes, but there are a few that move into the light and find that they aren't always understood or welcome. The Amari Aliquid usually take an active role in human society. Many of them work in the stock market, as editors, or — for the most adventurous — in politics.

The one thing that this aspect never seems to change is their motivation: they always want to change things. They sometimes change things for the better, and sometimes for the worse. It all depends on how things were before they got to them.

• Chymos — Wyrsta

The Chymos almost seem to work towards the exact opposite goals of their aspect, as is almost always the case with Wyrsta. They watch over the Wyld, carefully examining the details of the Wyld's influence, and often stopping things from going too far astray from what they should be. In other words, they tend to do battle with the minions of the Wyld if they feel the time is right and the need is there. Chymos are observers first. They watch over the places that are sacred to Gaia, and often defend them, even if their help is not wanted. Though none of the Garou would admit it — even if they knew — there are several caerns which have received warnings or actual defense from the Chymos. There are also several septs which have found themselves very suddenly under attack by the Ananasi of this aspect. Those who've gone too far, who come close to falling to the Wyrms in their pursuit of defending the Wyld, often find themselves with unexpected enemies.

The Chymos do not follow the Weaver or the Wyrms; they are Ananasi first, and guardians of the Wyld second. But they do acknowledge that both have a place in the natural order of things. The Triat is not complete unless all of the members are properly observed. Unfortunately, it seems the Garou — and others — are often guilty of forgetting this simple fact. The problem, as far as the Chymos can figure, comes from the needs of the more fanatical protectors of the Wyld to win at any cost. To that end, these would-be defenders often open themselves to the Wyrms or the Weaver — such as the Glass Walkers. These werewolves' reverence for the Weaver and her minions is, as far as the Chymos are concerned, a path that leads to almost certain damnation. The "Digital Web" is only one small

fraction of the Great Web, but the Glass Walkers continue to do everything they can to become more attuned to the newest labyrinth of madness Grandmother Spider has created. Some have begun actually removing parts of themselves and replacing them with artificial limbs and organs in an effort to better become one with the Weaver's growing domain.

While the idea is appealing in certain ways — knowing the enemy is important, after all — it's also very dangerous. The Weaver is strong enough without actually taking a full tribe of the werewolves to her metallic teat. To that end, the Chymos themselves, though they follow the practices of the Wyld, have begun fighting fire with fire. Many of the Chymos have computers and are adept at hacking into areas the Garou would rather not have them visiting. Their purpose? To remind the Glass Walkers that the Weaver is insane, too. They've hacked into personal accounts, rerouted finances, destroyed what the Glass Walkers perceive as important files, and altered information to suit their purposes. They've caused deliberate rifts between the would-be infiltrators of Pentex and the megacorporation, knowing full well that the multinational conglomerate of Wyrms-worshippers would, could and have, corrupted the technophiles without hesitation. They've also hunted down and killed a few of the Glass Walkers when all other options failed them. Truth be told, looking back on the War of Rage, most of them enjoy the latter part of their duties more than they should.

The Chymos don't hesitate to prove themselves in battle. The rub is the same as it always is with the Ananasi: if they must fight, they prefer to choose the battleground. For that reason, they've been known to slip false hints to the Glass Walkers, deliberate leaks of information that can "reveal" where they are hiding and what they've been doing. In their favor is the fact that Glass Walkers, like all of the Garou, are almost painfully predictable. More so as a result of their association with Grandmother Spider, who believes in routine above all else.

Merits and Flaws

There are quirks that are good, and there are quirks that are bad. This list of idiosyncrasies is designed to give your Ananasi some unusual character. All of these traits are optional, and the Storyteller should carefully consider before allowing them into her chronicle. (See the *Werewolf Players Guide* for more details.)

The *Werewolf Players Guide* has a list of Merits and Flaws for the Garou, some of which can be used by the Ananasi, and some of which really don't fit them very well. *Berserker*, *Hatred*, *Short Fuse*, *One Eye*, *One Arm*, *Insane Past Life*, *Pure Breed*, and *Silver Tolerance* simply don't work for the Ananasi. An Ananasi with one eye won't remain one-eyed except in Homid form, for example. Certain other Merits and Flaws just don't make as much sense. There should be an amazingly good reason for a spider-born Ananasi to have *Church Ties*, *Corporate Ties*, *Media Ties*, *Political Ties* or *Underworld Ties* at the beginning of a chronicle. They might get such connections later, but really shouldn't be well-connected to any of these groups when they are new to the world of the Damhàn.

The following Merits and Flaws pertain specifically to the Ananasi and their world.

Organized (1 point Merit)

All Ananasi are ordered and structured, but you take it to a new level. If someone needs to have a bag of rice sorted by size and shape, you are the one to do it. Many of the organizational tasks that others would consider mind-numbingly boring come as second nature to you, and you can achieve them in half the time that it would take anyone else. You would make the perfect accountant or comptroller for a company, and they would gladly pay extra to have you on their staff.

Human Form (3 point Merit)

Unlike most Ananasi, you appear completely human when in Homid. There are no telltale signs that a part of your genetic makeup involves members of the arachnid species. You still have pedipalps, but they can hide away completely, not even showing up on dental X-rays. Your blood, if examined, appears completely human, with no trace of foreign antigens in it. Any medical test, no matter how rigorous, would still prove you "human."

Venomous (3 point Merit)

Unlike most of your brethren, you retain your venom sacs even when in the Homid form. In this form, you can still use any Gifts involving venom that could normally only be used in Pithus or Lilian. This Merit cannot be taken with the Human Form Merit.

Sex Appeal (4 point Merit)

You may not be the most attractive creature around, but in human form you're pretty desirable, whether it's grace, charm or pheromones. You might not even be a given person's "type," but most folks still find being around you a highly pleasant experience. As a result, the opposite sex is putty in your hands. All Social rolls dealing with people who are attracted to your sex are at a -2 difficulty.

Crawlerling Alteration (4 point Merit)

You can choose not only the size of the Crawlerlings you break into, but also the breed of spider you become. As long as you have consumed at least a few of the spiders in question, you can become any type of spider you so desire, or as many breeds as you so desire for that matter.

Pithus Alteration (4 point Merit)

Unlike most of the Damhàn you have conscious control over exactly the appearance your body will take when you convert to the Pithus form. The actual changes to what you can do are minimal, but there are advantages to picking the spider-form you want to employ. Most Ananasi look a certain way and are readily recognizable by their appearance. With this ability

it's easier to blend in wherever you might not be known (and want to keep it that way). Mostly, however, the advantage is psychological. Some people are more terrified by the image of a tarantula than they are by the idea of a giant black widow.

Good Reputation (5 point Merit)

For whatever reason, the other Ovid in your area accept you as a kindred spirit; perhaps their spirit allies speak well of you. They may not like the Ananasi as a whole — and most of them don't — but they accept you as an equal. Your Rank among your own kind carries over to all other Ovid who follow the same aspect of the Triat that you do.

Lilian Alteration (6 point Merit)

An Ananasi's Lilian form is determined unconsciously; after the Metamorphosis, it seldom changes. However, you have a special talent for altering your Lilian form. You're better suited to face new terrain, as you can adjust your body to suit the territory — not only in how you can camouflage yourself against the land, but also in how you can maneuver over the landscape. There are also serious psychological advantages, as you can alter yourself to look more or less menacing, as necessary. You can even fabricate a seemingly completely human form from the waist up, making others believe you are defenseless, even when you are ready to destroy them.

Gender-Morph (6 point Merit)

You can change your human sex at will, by breaking into the Crawlerling form and reforming as a human again. This talent is very handy when being pursued, as few people normally confuse the male and female bodies. Even your scent changes, and any Ovid tracking you will likely think you are merely related to the werespider they were pursuing. (Of course, that might not get you off the hook in cases where the tracking shapeshifter doesn't mind using you as a hostage.) Note that this ability to change gender does not mean a radical change in appearance; both sexes have similar features, and look sufficiently alike to be siblings.

Hive Mind (7 point Merit)

You truly have a hive mind. Unlike most of the Ananasi, you do not need to choose leaders and drones when you break into the Crawlerling form. You retain your full consciousness while in this state, throughout all of your individual spiders. The only way to truly destroy you would be to obliterate every single spider that is a part of your form. If even one survives, you retain all of your memories. This isn't a perfect situation, however: Any spiders leaving your immediate area (a hundred-foot radius) "revert" back into regular spiders, and no longer keep your memories.

Unkempt (1 point Flaw)

You are a slob, both in your physical appearance, and in the manner that you keep your residence. This is not only annoying to most humans, it is almost intolerable to other

Ananasi. They look at you as a lesser cousin, despite your actions, and will always hesitate to come to you for help or information; few would want to be associated with you.

Vampire-phile (1 point Flaw)

Well, it's just embarrassing, but you've become obsessed with knowing everything you can about vampires and their society, to the point where it's becoming an obsession. You've started dressing like them, acting like them — up to and including avoiding sunlight for fear it will hurt you — and generally making yourself as much a part of their society as you can. While the vampires might think you're okay, the rest of the Ananasi are starting to worry, and that is not a good thing. In order to "break out of character" and act like you're supposed to among your own kind, you must spend one Willpower point per scene. Even then, the Storyteller might require extra rolls if you are in a bad situation, such as up against the Inquisition.

Impatient (2 point Flaw)

The Ananasi take too long to accomplish their goals in your mind. You want immediate gratification, and instant results from your actions. When things don't happen right away, you might become irritated, or even angry at the delay. Your plans never involve long-term effects, but concentrate on the here and now. If there is ever a time when things are taking too long, you must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) to avoid taking matters into your own hands.

Emotional Attachment (3 point Flaw)

You have managed to come through the Metamorphosis with more of your human emotions intact than most of the Ananasi possess, and you suffer for it. There's a part of you that longs for human companionship and wants to have a "normal" life, which may not be possible in the world of the Ananasi. Family and friends aren't just tools to you, they are necessary companionship, and a potential bargaining chip against you. In order to resist the emotional pulls of those closest to you (for instance, if a friend is endangered or you're forced to leave him for a while), you must make a Willpower roll, difficulty 8, to resist your emotional ties. Other Ananasi look upon this trait as a weakness, and you suffer a +1 difficulty to all social rolls when dealing with any of the Damhàn that know about your soft spot.

Empathy (3 point Flaw)

You aren't like other Ananasi. You actually feel for others. Most Ananasi don't care what happens to their prey, or any other being for that matter, but you care. It isn't just the people that you feed upon on a regular basis, but the homeless man on the street, or the single mother that just lost her job. You actually want to help them out. Whenever a situation arises that puts you in a position where you might be able to help out someone else, you must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) or your guilt will get the better of you, and you will do something to help them out. Sometimes

this can be as simple as giving a small monetary donation, while other times it will get you into deep trouble.

No Fangs (3 point Flaw)

Unlike most Ananasi, you do not grow fangs in any form. In any form that would normally allow you to inject venom, you can still transfer it through your saliva, you simply have to bite down on your target and hold on until the venom can take effect. In Homid form, you cannot bite into someone to drain their blood, but instead must create an open wound from which to drink. In any case, you can ingest only liquid food through normal drinking or eating.

Limited Diet (4 point Flaw)

You are, perhaps just a bit too much of a spider for your own good. Even in Homid form, you are limited to the softest foods when eating. Of course, you can still eat — you can vomit out the digestive fluids to liquefy anything you might be interested in eating — but it's not very socially acceptable in polite (or even impolite) society. Any attempts to eat foods more solid than pudding or gelatin will result in painful stomach cramps, and could even cause serious injury to your delicate digestive system.

Unstable Features (4 point Flaw)

Just as there are some Ananasi who can manage a more perfected human body, there are some who simply can't hold it together quite as well as others. You suffer from a shifting in your body weight and mass that is virtually unnoticeable from minute to minute, but can radically alter your features over the course of a few hours. While the changes are subtle, they are constant, and in a span of a day or so you look different enough to make you unrecognizable as the same person, at least visually. Your scent doesn't change, but your body, shape and face will alter continuously. The only respite from this is to change into one of your other forms, and then change back into your human form. Inevitably you start off with the same face and body after a transformation, but the instability sets in again each time, and leaves most of the people you meet unsettled around you for reasons they don't necessarily understand. You suffer a +2 difficulty on all Social rolls beyond making a first impression.

Can't Eat Solid Foods (5 point Flaw)

You live on a liquid diet. For some reason, the human digestive system doesn't work in your body. No matter how light the food, anything solid that you eat causes you intense pain until you regurgitate it. All of your nourishment comes from blood or liquefied flesh, and you need to feed this appetite far more often than a typical Ananasi would.

You automatically lose one blood point a day, whether you have used any for other purposes or not. If your blood pool drops below three, you run a chance of entering a hunger-induced frenzy (an exception to the rule that Ananasi cannot normally frenzy). The sight or smell of blood will require you

to make a Willpower roll (difficulty 5), or immediately try to begin feeding off that source. Even if the source is a friend or ally, you will attack her and drain as much blood as you need. For every blood point drained, you get to make another Willpower roll to come out of the frenzy.

Gifts

The Ananasi have a permanent tie to the spirit world in their link to the Mother-Queen, Ananasa. Through her teachings, they have learned many supernatural powers that aid them in the world. Unlike their cousins, the Garou, or any other Changing Breed, all of the Gifts that the Ananasi learn are taught to them by Ananasa. Through their Sylie — their unique connection to her wisdom — each character can attempt to learn a Gift. Sometimes, Ananasa gives her children Gifts they have not requested; the Ananasi know better than to question the wisdom of Mother. Otherwise, the Ananasi must petition Ananasa while holed away in their Sylie, sometimes for days or weeks on end, waiting for an answer — and sometimes they are denied.

The Ananasi are not taught the Gifts of the other Changing Breeds. Most of the time, the Ananasi learn the Gifts that they are taught by their Mother. On the rare occasions they learn an outside Gift, Ananasa sends one of her non-spider followers to teach the Ananasi directly. Similar to those of the other Changing Breeds, Ananasi Gifts are separated by the borders of the Triumvirate, with each aspect having easier access to certain Gifts than to others.

Ananasi can use their Gifts in any form unless otherwise stated.

General Gifts

- **Balance (Level One)** — As the Stargazer Gift.

• **Bind (Level One)** — The Ananasi with this Gift is able to attach two objects together by means of a small invisible bond. The bond between the objects cannot easily be broken.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and make a Gnosis roll (difficulty 6). Anyone trying to separate the objects must equal or beat the Ananasi's successes on a Strength roll (difficulty 7). The two objects that the character wishes to bind must be in contact with each other, and the Ananasi must physically touch them both for the Gift to work.

• **Jump (Level One)** — With this Gift the Ananasi can leap amazing distances with ease. Ananasi can cover substantial distances anyway, but with this Gift they can cover full city blocks.

System: The Ananasi must make a Strength + Athletics roll, difficulty 6. Each success doubles the normal jumping distance for the Ananasi. For example, three successes would change a normal vertical leap from 5 feet per success to 40 feet per success. 4 successes would allow vertical leaps that clear 80 feet per success. This Gift works only in Lilian and Pithus forms.

• **Many Eyes (Level One)** — The Ananasi is able to gain the spider's ability to view the entire world around

them. Their vision encompasses a 360-degree arc with their normal degree of visual acuity. Those looking directly at the Ananasi notice no difference, but from the corner of their eyes it looks as though the Ananasi has a series of eyes all around her head (or cephalothorax).

System: The player expends one blood point; the effect lasts for one scene. This Gift is, of course, mainly useful in Homid, Pithus and Lilian.

- **Resist Pain (Level One)** — As the Philodox Gift.
- **Resist Toxin (Level One)** — As the Fianna Gift.
- **Stolen Moments (Level One)** — This Gift allows the

Ananasi to literally steal away the last few minutes of memories from another being. This Gift is normally used to preserve a werespider's secrets if they are accidentally revealed, or to hide the fact that the Damhàn has fed on an unwilling donor.

System: The Damhàn must touch the target of this Gift and spend one Gnosis. A successful Gnosis roll against the target's Willpower is required. Success means that the target has the last 15 minutes of his or her life erased from their memories. There is no obvious way to retrieve those stolen moments, although certain extended rituals or Umbral quests might do the trick.

• **Web Haven (Level One)** — The Damhàn creates a haven for the night, usually within their normal dwelling as an added level of security. This webbing anchors in the material world as well as in the Umbra, and works primarily as an early warning alarm against potential attacks and as a warning that potential meals are nearby. This web must be spun, but it does not appear as a regular web unless the Ananasi wants it to. It remains invisible to mundane senses, blending into the background.

System: The werespider must spend one blood point to create the web (unless in Crawlerling form) and make a Gnosis roll, difficulty 7. The web covers roughly 100 feet per success. The anchor points for this web can be anywhere at all, even in thin air. Anything touching this webbing sends vibrations to the Ananasi, warning them of approach. This web offers no physical defenses against attack.

• **Web of Smoke (Level One)** — This Gift creates a simple trap made from webbing. Once the webbing is disturbed, it dissolves into a thick, noxious black smoke, which obscures the vision and smells worse than a hundred or so rotted eggs. While not effective as a weapon, it has stopped many creatures from getting too far into an Ananasi's lair.

System: The werespider spends one blood point. The web is not sticky, and can appear as simple as a mass of cobweb, or as an intricate, thick-stranded web obviously designed to keep out or capture intruders. Once anything touches this web with enough force to break any of the strands, the web explodes into a thick dark cloud of smoke, momentarily blinding anything in the immediate vicinity and causing a foul odor. Anyone caught in the cloud must roll Stamina, difficulty 8, or immediately go into a convulsive fit of vomiting for one turn per point of the spinner's permanent Gnosis.

• **Burrow (Level Two)** — As the metis Gift of the same name. The character must be in Pithus form to use this Gift.



• **Hand Fangs (Level Two)** — This Gift causes each limb to end in a very wickedly sharp point, much like a fang, and allows the Ananasi to inject venom from each limb (roughly one dose of venom per hand).

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Stamina + Occult. The hand fangs last for a scene, and inflict the Ananasi's Strength in aggravated damage.

• **Morphean Bite (Level Two)** — The Ananasi by and large already have venom, identical in every way to that of their most common spiders. Some are toxic and some are merely irritating. But with this Gift, the Damhàn can also attack supernatural enemies who might have defenses against their natural venom. Anyone bitten by the werespider is knocked unconscious immediately.

System: The character must inflict at least one health level of damage on his target after soak rolls; he then makes a Gnosis roll against a difficulty equal to the target's Stamina (never higher than 9). If successful, the target immediately succumbs, falling into a deep sleep for 12 hours per success. Any attacks on the target wake him, but loud noise or strong smells aren't sufficient.

• **Replenishment of the Flesh (Level Two)** — The Ananasi cannot regenerate as other Ovid do, but they can restore their flesh through the use of their blood pool. However, this Gift provides the Damhàn with another option. The werespider can summon spiders and insects into her body, assimilating the mass of these creatures into himself to heal the wounds. Insects do not survive the process; they are simply eaten. In the case of spiders, the creatures merely become another part of the Ananasi, replacing the spiders destroyed when the werespider was wounded.

Though the Ananasi keep this aspect of the Gift very secret, human flesh works just as well to mend wounds. The meat must be fresh, uncooked and consumed orally in order to provide healing.

System: The character may take no other actions while using this Gift. The arachnid flesh devoured in this process becomes a part of the werespider, as does the human flesh. Unfortunately for the human donors, they seldom live through the process. The player need make no rolls for this Gift, but must spend one Gnosis point per health level regenerated if human or spider flesh is consumed; if the character devours other insects, she must expend two Gnosis per health level regenerated. While the spiders and other insects do come when summoned, location makes a difference. It may well take hours to get enough insects together to heal grievous wounds. The werespider cannot summon humans with this Gift; she must make do with any that are handy (and that she can readily overpower).

• **Safety Line (Level Two)** — The Ananasi is able to create an invisible strand of strong webbing to protect her from a fall or other excessive motion. The strand is normally about eight feet long, but can be shortened to about three feet or lengthened to about fifteen feet. It is capable of supporting twice the Pithus weight of the Ananasi that created it.

System: The character must make a Wits + Survival roll (difficulty 7); no blood point expenditure is necessary. The

strand's attachment must remain fixed, so the character's movements cannot take her beyond the length of the strand without destroying the line. The line can be snapped by excessive weight, or by inflicting three health levels of damage to it. The line has an effective soak pool of three dice.

• **Silencing Webs (Level Two)** — This Gift generates a heavy caul of webs over the mouth on an enemy. These webs can potentially smother a target, but are primarily used to keep the target from calling out warnings or biting the Ananasi.

System: The werespider spends one blood point and rolls Dexterity + Firearms, difficulty 6, to hit the target's mouth. This same Gift can be used to cover a target's eyes or ears, but the difficulty increases to 7. The webs are of normal strength.

• **Spines (Level Two)** — The Ananasi using this Gift creates defensive spines on his exoskeleton, much like the barbs of a porcupine. These spines break off fairly easily, remaining in the flesh of anyone who attacks the Damhàn in hand-to-hand combat.

System: The character spends one Gnosis point to activate this Gift. While the spines remain, anyone striking the Ananasi with bare flesh receives a dice pool of aggravated damage equal to the attacker's Strength. The Gift lasts for one scene.

• **Tarantula's Kiss (Level Two)** — The Ananasi may stiffen the hairs on his body, making them as hard as the quills on a porcupine. Once they are hardened in this manner, however, the Damhàn can fire them away from his body in a volley of arrowlike missiles.

System: This is primarily a defensive Gift, and the character doesn't have fine control over where the hair-arrows go. The character must spend one blood point and roll Dexterity + Firearms, difficulty 6. Each success means one of the hairs strikes a random target within thirty feet, doing Strength + 1 nonaggravated damage. The hairs are coated in a mild toxin, which, while not fatal, is extremely irritating. Living targets struck by the hairs must make a Stamina roll, difficulty 8, or suffer from a painful, itchy rash that lasts for several hours. All Willpower rolls are at a +2 difficulty while the stings' effect remains.

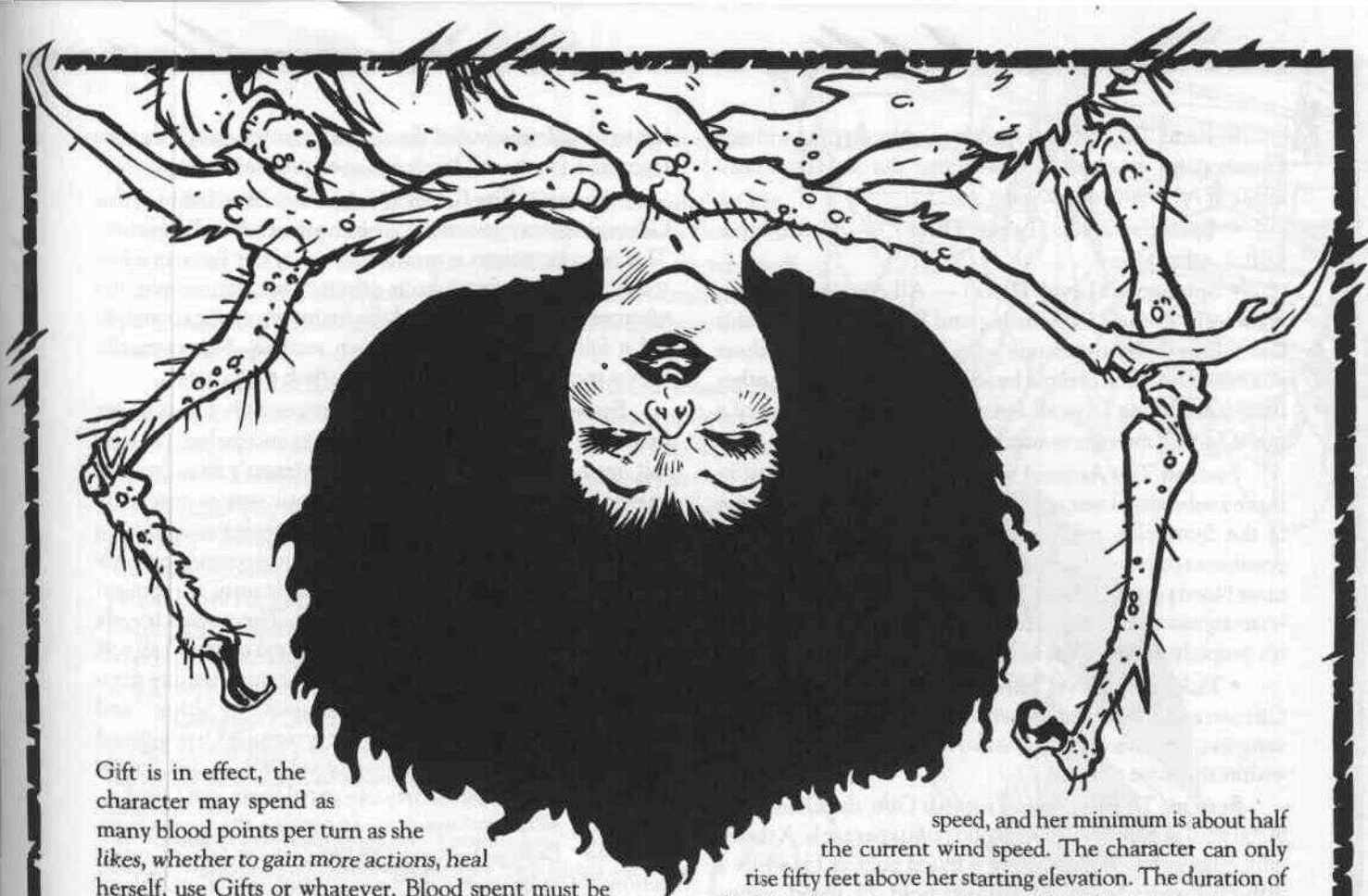
• **Waterwalk (Level Two)** — Through intense concentration, the Ananasi is able to walk on water as though it were a solid surface. The water does not become level or unmoving unless it is naturally calm, making it a difficult walk for anyone in Homid form.

System: The Ananasi must make a successful Willpower roll (difficulty 7) before beginning the walk. If he is unsuccessful, he cannot attempt the Gift again for the remainder of the scene. The character must continue to make Willpower rolls each turn for the duration of the walk; if he fails his roll at any time, he can no longer stay on the water's surface, and cannot attempt to Waterwalk again that that scene.

• **Blood Pump (Level Three)** — This Gift allows the Ananasi to metabolize ingested blood more quickly than normal.

System: The character spends one Gnosis point to activate this Gift; the effects last for one scene. While the





Gift is in effect, the character may spend as many blood points per turn as she likes, whether to gain more actions, heal herself, use Gifts or whatever. Blood spent must be replenished in the usual way.

- **Bug Lord (Level Three)** — Ananasi using this gift can summon vast swarms of insects and arachnids to an area. The Ananasi can communicate with these insects, though the talk is likely to be very limited in concept. Nonetheless, the summoned arthropods obey to the best of their abilities.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Charisma + Animal Ken, difficulty 7. The number of successes determines the size of the swarm (limited, of course, by the Storyteller's discretion as to how many insects are available in the area). One success would summon enough insects to cover a person, while six or more successes can bring enough insects to blanket a small office complex. The insects follow simple commands, such as "Eat that person" or "Defend me." They are limited to their normal traveling speeds, and while they work in unison, the insects aren't really bright enough to follow complex commands.

- **Catch The Wind (Level Three)** — This Gift gives the Ananasi the ability to ride on the winds, gliding from place to place with apparent ease. The character appears to be surrounded by an ethereal envelope, looking something like a ghost floating in the air.

System: The character spends one blood point and makes a Stamina roll to become enshrouded with remarkably fine, non-adhesive webbing. The character cannot hide this effect, as it is the means for the Gift to take hold. The Ananasi has only limited control over the direction and speed that she travels; her maximum speed is equal to the current wind

speed, and her minimum is about half the current wind speed. The character can only rise fifty feet above her starting elevation. The duration of the Gift is five minutes per success. Traveling against the wind requires the character to tack into it much as a sailboat would, greatly slowing her progress.

- **Cling (Level Three)** — The use of this Gift allows the Ananasi to walk about on any solid surface, in any form, much the same as a small spider walks on walls. On the wall, the character can perform any action that would normally be possible for him. Due to the nature of this Gift, the character is not disoriented by walking on a wall or hanging upside down.

System: The Ananasi must spend one blood point to activate this Gift. The strength of the surface the character wishes to climb is not an issue; otherwise the paint would flake off walls if the character tried wall-crawling in any form other than *Crawlerling*. The character is able to use his full Strength, but the strength of the surface does become relevant if the Ananasi chooses to carry anything with him — the Gift allows for only the Ananasi's weight. The effects last for a scene.

- **Part Webs (Level Three)** — The Damhàn using this gift can walk through any webbing, even the Great Web, without actually disturbing the webs where they lay. This is very useful for moving through abandoned houses, and right past the traps set by others of their kind.

System: The character rolls Wits + Alertness, difficulty 6, and spends one Gnosis point. One success is enough to activate this Gift and it lasts for one scene.

- **Slick Webs (Level Three)** — This gift allows the Ananasi to create an almost completely frictionless web. These webs are often used to line the tunnels of their own webs or web traps, allowing them to keep a target from escaping them easily.



System: The Ananasi spends one blood point and one Gnosis point to create this webbing; the web lasts until burnt or otherwise destroyed.

- **Spider's Grace (Level Three)** — As the lupus Gift: Catfeet.

- **Spinnerets (Level Three)** — All Ananasi can generate webs in their Crawlerling and Pithus forms, but this Gift allows them to generate webs in any shape. The sheer volume of webbing created by a Damhàn in anything other than Crawlerling form all but guarantees the capture of a target foolish enough to touch the stuff.

System: The Ananasi must spend one blood point to make a substantial amount of webbing, and at the discretion of the Storyteller might have to spend more. While it's possible to cover a skyscraper in webs, it would require 20 or more blood points to do so. The webbing created by this Gift is strong enough to stop a private jet in its tracks, provided it's properly anchored in advance and there's enough of it.

- **Tick Body (Level Three)** — The Ananasi using this Gift can concentrate blood within her form, much as elder vampires do, thus allowing her to store more nourishment within the same volume.

System: There is no roll for this Gift; the character's blood pool simply becomes 5 blood points per rank. A third-rank Ananasi would thus have a blood pool of 15, while a fifth-rank elder would be able to hold 25 blood points altogether. Note that this Gift does not change the fact that an Ananasi can only spend 1 blood point per turn (without the aid of the Gift: Blood Pump, of course).

- **Trap Door (Level Three)** — This Gift allows the Ananasi to craft an Umbral "pocket" much like a trapdoor spider's lair. Such lairs can be placed anywhere, whether deep wilderness or the sides of a skyscraper. The Nuwisha borrowed this Gift some time ago, a fact which irks the Ananasi to this day.

System: Once the Ananasi has chosen a location, she must sacrifice one permanent Gnosis to create the Umbral pocket, then roll Wits + Subterfuge (difficulty 7) to properly camouflage the "door."

- **Venom Bite (Level Three)** — The character can use her fangs to inject a mutated venom into a target. This powerful neurotoxin paralyzes the victim, leaving only the autonomic systems — heartbeat, breathing — unaffected. Unlike regular spider venom, this toxin is immediate in effect, and capable of dropping even a raging Garou.

System: The character must first successfully bite the target, then spend a Gnosis point and make a Gnosis roll, difficulty of the target's Stamina +4 (never above 9) for the venom to take effect. One dose of the poison is enough to paralyze the victim. Two doses (administered separately, of course) can stop even the autonomic systems of the victim, leading to death by asphyxiation or heart attack. This Gift is costly, and most Ananasi use it only when they are outnumbered by their opponents. Certain supernaturals, such as vampires, can expel their own blood, which allows them to remove the toxins. Ovid and other regenerating creatures can also heal themselves,

but to cure themselves of the venom requires enough time to regenerate four health levels of non-aggravated damage.

- **Entropic Bite (Level Four)** — the character using this Gift injects a very powerful toxin into a target through their bite. This necrotic poison is much like that of the Brown recluse spider, but is far faster in its effects. The flesh simply dies wherever the bite occurs, and the toxins are strong enough to kill a full-grown human in fifteen seconds. Moreover, the poison spreads, taking more healthy flesh each round.

System: The character must successfully bite a target first; then he spends two Gnosis points and makes a Gnosis roll against a difficulty equal to the target's Stamina + 5 (never higher than 9). Once the necrotic venom enters the target's system, the target immediately feels the agonizing burn of the venom in action. The target takes one unsoakable health level of aggravated damage each turn; the poison stays in effect for one turn per success. The poison travels through the bloodstream, killing red blood cells and all soft tissues as it goes. The remains of the victim who dies from this Gift are soft enough for the werespider to "drink," and can be used to heal any wounds the werespider has suffered as if the Damhàn were drinking blood. While this poison even works on vampires, they can expel their own blood — five blood points minimum — to remove the toxins from their body. During this time, the vampire can take no other actions. Most younger vampires can only "spend" one blood point per turn, leaving them completely vulnerable for at least five turns. Other Ananasi are unaffected by this Gift.

- **Iron Web (Level Four)** — The Ananasi can spin a web that is nearly transparent and remarkably durable. Many Ananasi use this webbing to create their permanent lairs and Sylies.

System: The character must spend one Gnosis and make a Gnosis roll, difficulty 7 to activate the Gift before spending blood points as usual to spin the webbing. The Iron Web made by this Gift is extremely tough and can last for months, even years as long as the Ananasi keeps it properly groomed. The webbing is highly resistant to fire and soaks damage as if it had the Ananasi's Homid-form Stamina. Each cubic foot of the webbing can resist five health levels (after soak) of damage before breaking. Ananasi can consume this webbing and use it again after digesting it properly, thus avoiding the need to spend more blood points on it.

- **Preserve (Level Four)** — This Gift lets the Ananasi create a special coating that keeps objects in a form of stasis until the character needs them again. The object appears to have a soft, silky cocoon around it, preventing it from being damaged by outside forces. Fire, physical force, even the ravages of time are kept out by this delicate weave. Only the Ananasi who wove the cocoon can open it without special occult knowledge.

System: The character must expend one blood point and roll Wits + Rituals (difficulty 8) to create this weave. The Ananasi can cover a single object of up to his Gnosis rating in square feet. The coating keeps the enclosed object in stasis, keeping meat and other items fresh, and even maintaining living things in a coma-like slumber. The effect lasts until the cocoon is broken; the exact

means of cracking the cocoon are up to the Storyteller, but only supernatural power has a chance of success.

- **Hydraulic Strength (Level Four)** — The Ananasi with this Gift can metabolize the blood she drinks to dramatically increase her strength.

System: The player rolls Strength + Medicine and the character spends a variable number of blood points to activate this Gift. Her Strength increases by 1 for each blood point she spent while invoking the Gift; this excess Strength lasts for one scene.

- **Web Blanket (Level Four)** — Ananasi using this Gift create a covering of webs over a target. These webs are thick and sticky, actually springing from the body of the target itself, and covering the target in an airtight blanket of webbing that prevents breathing and obscures all senses. It is a very unpleasant way to die.

System: The werespider spends one Gnosis and one blood point and rolls Dexterity + Medicine (difficulty of the target's Willpower). Success means the target spontaneously begins generating the thick webs that completely cover the target's body. Attempts to tear the webbing away are resisted by an effective Strength of 9. Burning the webs is a possible solution, but the target covered by the webs takes the same damage as the webs themselves.

- **Carapace (Level Five)** — The Ananasi generates a thick carapace of armor over her natural exoskeleton. This armor allows for substantial additional protection, and regenerates if it is injured.

System: The Ananasi gains +4 Stamina for the purpose of soaking damage. The armor regenerates itself along with the werespider's body and lasts for one scene. Though no roll is required, the character must spend one Gnosis point to activate the Gift.

- **Survivor (Level Five)** — As the Bone Gnawer Gift of the same name.

- **Umbral Barrier (Level Five)** — The Ananasi spins her web into the Great Web, strengthening the Gauntlet in the designated area and making it far more difficult for any non-Ananasi to pass into or out of the Umbra in that location. The webs generated by this Gift are intangible and invisible from the Gaia Realm, and merely look like another piece of the Great Web from the Umbra.

System: The character must spend the appropriate number of blood points for the web she wants to build; in addition, an expenditure of two Gnosis and a Wits + Occult roll (difficulty 8) is required. Each success increases the Gauntlet rating between the Gaia Realm and the Low, Middle and High Umbra by one. These barriers are often used as protection from invasion, and also as revenge against those who've slighted the werespider. This Gift's effects are permanent, although from the Penumbra the added webbing can be torn away from the Gauntlet — an involved and difficult task.

Aspect Gifts

Tenere

- **Groom (Level One)** — This Gift allows the Ananasi to insure his appearance in any situation. No matter what the circumstance — covered in mud, walking in a hurricane, anything — the character always looks his best.



System: This Gift is always active, and the character need do nothing to have it take effect. The Tenere becomes immune to circumstantial Appearance penalties, although actual supernatural powers can overcome this Gift's protection.

• **Patience of Ananasa (Level One)** — The Tenere is able to become motionless for hours on end, without cramping or tiring, in any position the character could naturally assume. The character does not become more difficult to see, but may be more easily overlooked due to the total lack of motion; the Ananasi using this gift does not even appear to be breathing.

System: The character makes a Willpower roll, difficulty 7. Each success indicates one hour that the Ananasi can remain motionless in one spot. If the character moves, the effect is broken. After using this Gift, the Ananasi cannot use it again for an amount of time equal to that she spent motionless.

• **Breath of Ananasa (Level Two)** — The Ananasi is able to create a pocket of air that can serve as an alternate breathing source for a temporary period. The character creates a wispy looking form that holds a small amount of air on or near his head. If unused, the air slowly leaks out, deflating the form after only a few minutes.

System: The player rolls Gnosis (difficulty 6). The character gains an amount of air good for one minute plus one minute for each success.

• **Camouflage (Level Two)** — Through the use of this Gift, the Ananasi is able to blend any one object or small group of objects into the surrounding area, coating them in a weblike substance that takes on the color and texture of the things around it. Any character not actively searching the area overlooks the item as a natural part of the surroundings.

System: The character must expend one Gnosis point, and make a successful Manipulation + Subterfuge roll (difficulty 6). The number of successes equals the number of successes that an active searcher must exceed to notice the item.

• **A Mother's Look (Level Three)** — As the Galliard Gift: Eye of the Cobra.

• **Reshape Object (Level Three)** — As the homid Gift.

• **Understanding the Tapestry (Level Four)** — The Tenere using this Gift can see the connections between items that seem unrelated, thus making it easier to solve mysteries in which the items have played a part. As an example, the Tenere could see a gun's connection not only to a murder, but to the murderer and his motive.

System: The player rolls Wits + Enigmas, difficulty 7. Each success reveals more of the story behind the items and their connection. One success might indicate that the aforementioned gun killed Alex Williams in the third house on Maple Street. Five successes, on the other hand, would reveal that Alex was killed by a man hired by his wife's lover in a carefully laid out plan to cash in on the \$1,000,000.00 life insurance policy; that the lover also has plans for getting rid of Joe's wife in the near future, and that the hired gun is considering blackmailing the lover for more money. The character can then use this information to avenge Mr. Williams, or to blackmail the guilty parties

herself, or even to set them up in a situation where they are forced to confront each other in a final conflict.

• **Web Sheet (Level Four)** — The Damhàn using this Gift generates a very large web at amazing speeds, allowing her to cover an entire area in strands of sticky webbing.

System: The character spends two blood points in order to cover an entire area roughly the size of a football field. Anything caught in the webbing must break free using their Strength against the webbing's effective Strength of 9. Ananasi are not affected by this Gift's effects.

• **Spider on the Mirror (Level Five)** — The Ananasi with this Gift is able to create exact duplicates of herself to act as drones, suddenly turning into a one-woman army. The created drones are mindless, powerless entities, possessing only the physical abilities of the Tenere that created them. Each of the duplicates will act only as directed by their creator, following those directions to the letter. Once their instructed task has been completed, the created duplicates stop all actions, awaiting further direction.

System: The Ananasi must make a Gnosis roll (difficulty 8). For every success, the character may create one physical duplicate of herself. For each created duplicate, the Tenere must also pay one blood point. The character must give verbal instruction to all the duplicates, who will immediately begin to carry out their assigned duty. Each duplicate possesses the physical Attributes, Gifts, Talents and Skills of its creator, but its Mental Attributes are no higher than 1, and Knowledges do not transfer. Once created, the duplicates will begin to disappear at an alarming rate. Beginning the fourth turn after they are created, one duplicate will disappear every other turn, until only the original Ananasi is left.

• **Thieving Touch of Spiders (Level Five)** — As the Ragabash Gift: Thieving Talons of the Magpie.

Hatar

• **Blood of Pain (Level One)** — The character with this Gift is able to use his ichor as a poison that will debilitate his enemy. Through intense physical conditioning, the Ananasi is able to change the nature of his blood to a foreign substance with unusual properties.

System: The character spends one blood point. The Ananasi must use ichor fresh from his body, meaning that he has to draw it from an open wound. The character's ichor causes anyone who ingests it to become physically ill. Affected characters must make a Willpower roll, difficulty equal to Ananasi's permanent Gnosis, or be rendered completely ill. Such victims must make a Stamina roll each turn to take any action; otherwise, they helplessly retch for that turn. The duration lasts the entire scene, or until the toxin is somehow neutralized.

• **Wyrmling Kinship (Level One)** — The user of this Gift can convince all Wyrmling-affiliated creatures in a given area to consider her an ally, or at least to ignore her.

System: The character rolls Charisma + Primal-Urge, difficulty 8, to make the Wyrmlings more inclined to conversation, rather than violence. Each success reduces the



difficulty of all Social rolls with the Wyrms' minions by 1. The Wyrmlings may attempt to resist this effect by rolling Willpower against a difficulty of 4 + the Ananasi's successes.

- **Blood of Illusion (Level Two)** — Much like the Gift: Blood of Pain, this Gift converts a werespider's blood into an unusual toxin. In this case, the Ananasi's ichor induces hallucinations in anyone that ingests it.

System: Afflicted characters must make a Willpower roll (difficulty of the Ananasi's Gnosis) or be trapped in the hallucinations. Although the exact nature of the hallucination is up to the Storyteller, there's a chance that the Hatar can influence the vision with a quick whispered suggestion. The illusion is entirely real to the affected target, but cannot cause damage of its own, though characters can be deluded into harming themselves (for example, if they're compelled to leap in front of an onrushing vehicle to save an "endangered friend"). The hallucination lasts for a number of turns equal to the Ananasi's Gnosis.

- **Call of the Wurm (Level Two)** — As the Galliard Gift.

- **Corrupt (Level Three)** — With this Gift, the Ananasi can make an object weaker. The Ananasi cannot destroy the object, only accentuate the natural flaws, bringing out the entropy of the item and causing it to become more unstable and more easily destroyed. This Gift is only effective against inanimate objects.

System: The Ananasi must make a Gnosis roll as if it were a damage roll. If he successfully "wounds" the object, the object loses one soak die or health level (Storyteller's option) for the scene.

- **Pulse of the Invisible (Level Three)** — As the Theurge Gift.

- **Touch of Blood (Level Three)** — This Gift allows the Hatar to use either of the Gifts: Blood of Pain or Blood of Illusion through contact rather than ingestion. By simply having the character's ichor touch the target, the Ananasi can affect her victim as if he had ingested her blood.

System: The system for determining the effects remains consistent with the respective Gifts, except that the ichor need only touch exposed flesh on the target. Touch of Blood costs nothing to use, but does not change the cost of the other Gifts.

- **Ill Wind (Level Four)** — The Hatar using this Gift weakens the wall between worlds, allowing Banes to materialize or affect a particular location with ease. Use of this Gift is not recommended for the weak of heart.

System: The character slices open an arm and spends three blood points, which are spread over the area to be infested, and then rolls Intelligence + Occult. Each success weakens the Gauntlet by 1 for the benefit of Banes; this weak point lasts for one hour per success. The character has absolutely no control over the Banes who choose to respond, and would likely be better off somewhere else, just in case.

- **Still Blood (Level Four)** — The Ananasi's ichor can induce paralysis simply by touching exposed flesh. The afflicted victim becomes weak even to the point of motionlessness.

System: Characters that have been splashed by the ichor must make a Stamina roll (difficulty 6). For every success below the Ananasi's permanent Gnosis, the affected character loses one point of Strength. Lost Strength returns at a rate of one point per hour. Like the Level Three Gift: Touch of Blood, the ichor must be fresh from an open wound on the Ananasi, and must touch exposed flesh.

- **Burning Blood (Level Five)** — This powerful Gift lets the Ananasi change his ichor into the equivalent of acid. The ichor can burn through metal, stone, and flesh at varying speeds; of course, the werespider remains immune to the baleful effects.

System: Once the Ananasi has learned this Gift, he may activate it at will, with only an action's worth of thought. The acidic ichor inflicts a damage pool equal to the character's permanent Gnosis rating, and is treated as aggravated damage. Needless to say, anyone biting the Hatar is in for a very unpleasant surprise.

- **Touch of the Unweaver (Level Five)** — The Hatar can prevent another creature from regenerating or healing diseases with a touch.

System: The character rolls Intelligence + Medicine, difficulty equal to the target's Gnosis (or Willpower -2 for creatures with no Gnosis) and spends two Gnosis points. Success halts the target's healing processes cold, and the victim also suffers a +5 difficulty (with a maximum of 10) to resist diseases. Each success stops regeneration and other healing for one day, or until the Gift is somehow nullified.

Kumoti

- **Inspire (Level One)** — This allows the Ananasi to pass along the spirit of creation to another around them. The Kumoti can cause a particular target to suddenly fill with creativity, finding the right word to make a speech, discovering the insight that had been eluding their artwork, or just finding the courage to state something hidden. This Gift has a negative side as well, as the inspired individual can sometimes act rather foolhardily.

System: The Kumoti must expend one Gnosis point and be within ten feet of her target. This Gift does not make the target susceptible to suggestion; it merely enhances their creativity for a task that they would normally do, but for one reason or another have never been able to accomplish before. Even the most foolhardy won't be driven to self-destructive acts — unless, of course, they are already on the edge of the building ready to jump.

- **Mother's Touch (Level One)** — As the Theurge Gift.

- **Arachnophobia (Level Two)** — The Kumoti with this Gift can afflict a person with an irrational fear of spiders. The victim reacts with extreme fear and revulsion towards the spider, either attacking or fleeing from any spider that she encounters while under the Gift's influence. Naturally, the size of the spider will have some influence on her reaction — naturally arachnophobic victims are in real trouble.



System: The Ananasi must spend one Gnosis point, and roll Manipulation + Intimidation, resisted by the target's Willpower. The duration of the fear is one day per success (or one hour per success in the case of supernatural creatures). Victims may spend Willpower to fight the fear, but only for a turn at a time. Any character already afflicted with arachnophobia will become catatonic at the sight of a spider.

- **Insight of the Mother (Level Two)** — As the Theurge Gift: Sight from Beyond.

- **Lead-Line (Level Two)** — The character using this Gift, if he has something personal belonging to his prey, can hunt down a single target, remaining on the trail despite almost any obstacles or attempts at obfuscation. A silvery thread of energy leads the Ananasi to his prey, looking past illusions and continuing through any barriers that might be in the way.

System: The character rolls Wits + Investigation (difficulty 6 + any successes the target has achieved in attempts to hide or cover his tracks) and spends a Gnosis point. If successful, the Kumoti can follow the "silver thread" of energy anywhere. This Gift lasts until the Ananasi decides to stop the hunt, or until the target is located.

- **Alter Lilian (Level Three)** — The Kumoti can shift his Lilian form around at will, sprouting new arms and legs or "humanizing" his features. Although each new form must still be distinctly Lilian, and unmistakable for anything other than a werespider when viewed as a whole, there's a lot of room for creativity.

System: The Ananasi must simply make a successful Willpower roll (difficulty 7); the alteration counts as an action.

- **Sense Motion (Level Three)** — The Ananasi is able to go beyond the normal five senses, and detect motion in the area around her. Unlike the Gift: Many Eyes, this Gift allows the character to sense any motion in her normal area of perception, no matter the size of the object, the area's illumination, or even whether the target is invisible to normal vision.

System: The character must expend one Gnosis point. Any movement in the area can be detected by a regular Perception roll (difficulty 6) for the duration of the scene.

- **Mindblock (Level Four)** — As the Silver Fang Gift.

- **Nature of the Beast (Level Four)** — This Gift reduces its victim from their normal temperament to a raw, primal creature of their most base interests. The affected creature acts only toward the fulfillment of one simple, direct emotion. If the target is at heart extremely selfish, he acts only for himself; if he's naturally doubtful, he becomes unable to make a decision, constantly questioning everything around him; if he is perpetually angry, he becomes a raging beast attacking everything in the area. All reason and logic will desert the target, focusing on the one emotion that drives them.

System: The character must make a Gnosis roll, difficulty of the target's Willpower. The effects of this Gift last for the scene.

- **Assimilation (Level Five)** — As the homid Garou Gift.

- **Mass Confusion (Level Five)** — This powerful Gift changes the perception of the individuals in the Kumoti's immediate area. The Ananasi is able to confuse the partici-

pants, causing them lose track of where they are, who surrounds them, and which direction they were facing. Friends can appear to be foes, physical objects can appear meters away from their actual locations, and none of the senses can be trusted.

System: The Ananasi must expend two Gnosis points. For the duration of the scene, any individuals in the area — whether they be Damhàn, Ovid, vampire, or other — must then make a Wits roll (difficulty 8) to take an action against any selected target. If they make their roll, the action occurs as intended. If they miss their roll, the Storyteller must randomly determine another target in the same area — excluding the Kumoti using the Gift — to which the action is redirected. This Gift fouls attacks, speeches, Gift use, even dodges — all actions that focus on a specific target. The Ananasi that uses this Gift is immune to its effects, but cannot take any other actions for the duration of the Gift; if he takes any action, the effects of the Gift are canceled.

Faction Gifts

Myrmidon

- **Illusion of Size (Level One)** — The Ananasi is able to project an aura that deceives those looking at the Myrmidon are deceived into thinking that he is much larger than his actual size. The character does not gain any physical benefit, but any character viewing him might give pause at the small man that now looks like an angry linebacker.

System: The player rolls Manipulation (difficulty 6) against the opponent's Willpower (difficulty 7).

- **Open Seal (Level One)** — As the Ragabash Gift.

- **Might of Ananasa (Level Two)** — As the Level Four general Ananasi Gift: Hydraulic Strength; the warriors are certainly best suited to use power of this nature.

- **Pincers (Level Two)** — The Ananasi using this Gift grows powerful pincers on her first set of arms, much like those of a lobster or crab. These claws are very sharp and very tough, capable of causing massive damage.

System: The player spends one blood point. The pincers form instantly, and are capable of doing Strength +4 aggravated damage. However, for the duration of the scene, the character is incapable of manipulating objects with any effectiveness, as her claws have no fine motor skills.

- **True Fear (Level Two)** — As the Ahroun Gift.

- **Scorpion Tail (Level Three)** — The character using this Gift generates a huge, fully functional scorpion's tail, complete with venom and stinger. This Gift may only be used in Lilian and Pithus.

System: The character spends three blood points to create the tail. The tail has a Strength equal to the Ananasi's own and does Strength +2 aggravated damage when striking. The venom in the tail is either a powerful neurotoxin (which most shapeshifters will shrug off, even if they find it uncomfortable) or the poison derived from another Gift. If a Gift poison is used, the character must already know the Gift to generate the toxin and must activate the Gift as normal.



- **Weak Arm (Level Three)** — As the Philodox Gift.
- **Blood Hunt (Level Four)** — The Myrmidon may track down any one target she's encountered within the past twenty-four hours, or any target that she has ever fed from before, regardless of distance.

System: The character rolls Wits + Primal Urge, difficulty 7, and spends one Gnosis per scene of pursuit. This Gift lasts until the target has been located, or until the Ananasi cancels it, whichever comes first. The Myrmidon may track only one person in this way at a time.

- **Drying Bite (Level Four)** — As the Ragabash Gift: Whelp Body.

- **Image of The Great Mother (Level Five)** — This Gift allows the Ananasi to directly channel the power of Ananasa into their form for a limited time. For a short period, the character's size doubles, mutating into a huge creature that is similar to the Lilian aspect with four spider-like legs, and four human-like arms. The head grows eight red glowing eyes, and has two huge fangs in place of the mouth, dripping a virulent poison. The entire body is covered in a thick, chitinous armor. After the Myrmidon assumes this form, he is reduced to Crawlerling form for one week.

System: The Ananasi must spend two Gnosis points and roll Charisma + Rituals (difficulty 9). If successful, he gains the following abilities: Strength +5, Stamina +6, Perception +2, and Appearance -5. Each of the arms ends in razor-sharp talons, making fine manipulation impossible, but in battle

doing Strength +2 aggravated damage. Any that view the character in this form—including Ananasi and other Changing Breeds—must immediately roll Willpower, difficulty 7, or suffer the effects of the Delirium. Ananasi does not like to be called upon in this way, and will always ask the Ananasi to perform a special task at some point in the near future. The effects of this Gift last one scene, unless the Myrmidon shapeshifts again before the scene's end.

- **Thousand Hands (Level Five)** — Although Ananasi cannot usually use all their arms to the same effect, this Gift allows Myrmidons to multitask with great efficiency. The Myrmidon may wield multiple weapons or make multiple attacks with each one landing at full effect.

System: The Myrmidon need only spend a Gnosis point; for the remainder of the scene, he gains fifteen dice to his dice pools *only* for the purpose of splitting actions. Thus, if the Ananasi had an attack pool of eight dice, he could not attack with more than eight dice in his pool—but he could make three attacks: two with eight dice in each attack pool and one with seven dice.

Diskr

- **Curse of the Great Web (Level One)** — The Viskr using this Gift can make the way into and out of the Umbra more difficult for one target, by adding invisible spirit-fibers that catch onto the Gauntlet and make passage more difficult.

System: The Viskr touches his target and rolls Wits + Occult, difficulty 6. Success increases the effective Gauntlet for that target by one for the duration of the scene.

- **Scent of Sweet Honey (Level One)** — As the Bone Gnawer Gift.

- **Mindspeak (Level Two)** — As the Level One Galliard Gift.

- **Minor Unweaving (Level Two)** — The Viskr using this Gift can attempt to negate a Gift, spell or enchantment by Unweaving the targeted effect. In so doing, the Viskr can unravel minor magical effects on any given target, or even destroy a Gift in "mid-flight."

System: This Gift only works on Level One Gifts, Disciplines, Sphere effects or other magical abilities. The player rolls Dexterity + Occult and spends one Gnosis; he can even affect Gifts with an instantaneous effect, but only if he has delayed his action to do so. This Gift only works against Gifts that are directed at a specific target, and has no effect on Gifts that cause damage to large groups, or to the environment.

- **Calcify (Level Three)** — With this Gift the Viskr can cement a location within the Great Web, preventing anything short of a major disaster from causing any change in the location. This is often used to protect areas of special interest to the Ananasi.

System: The werespider makes a Gnosis roll, difficulty 7. Each success grants the targeted item or location three extra soak dice. This Gift can be used only on inanimate objects (even vampires and robots don't qualify), and cannot affect areas greater than an acre. The effects last for one scene.

- **Cocoon (Level Three)** — As the Level Four homid Gift.

- **Lesser Unweaving (Level Three)** — As the Level Two Gift: Minor Unweaving, save that this Gift may affect any single Gift or power of Level Two or lower.

- **Attunement (Level Four)** — As the Bone Gnawer Gift.

- **Brethren Call (Level Four)** — The Ananasi is able to call others to her aid in a time of crisis. The character has the choice of contacting the two closest Ananasi, or a massive quantity of nearby spiders. The Ananasi do not magically appear, but are suddenly informed of the character's difficulty and location. If the character chooses to summon the local spiders, they converge on the area *en masse*, with the single mindset of aiding the Ananasi in trouble. The spiders do not gain magical intelligence, but within those limits do all they can to help the Ananasi who summoned them.

System: The player must spend one blood point and roll Willpower. The difficulty in contacting other Ananasi is equal to the distance (in miles) that the character is from their Sylie, divided by 10 (minimum of 3). The difficulty in summoning the local spiders is 7, with every success summoning twenty spiders to the Ananasi's aid.

- **Greater Unweaving (Level Four)** — As the Level Two Gift: Minor Unweaving, save that this Gift unravels any single Gift or power of Level Three or lower, and the Gnosis cost is raised to two.

- **Shattering (Level Five)** — The Ananasi employing this Gift unweaves the affects of a specific Gift or magical enchantment on a target. The end result depends on the exact nature of what the previous Gift was meant to do, but this could effectively destroy a fetish or reseal an opened caern.

System: The Viskr rolls Intelligence + Occult, and spends three Gnosis. The difficulty is equal to the level of the original Gift/rite/effect originally used, +4. (Countering a Level Five Gift would thus be at difficulty 9.) If successful, the item or person affected by the power or enchantment is freed from its effects. Note that this is not always beneficial; this Gift also works against Gifts such as Resist Toxin.

- **Summon Paradox-spirit (Level Five)** — This powerful Gift not only brings a Paradox-spirit into the area, it also suggests a target for the Paradox-spirit to punish. This Gift only works against targets that are suffering from Paradox as it is, such as mages and those the Viskr has already marked via the rite: Summon Paradox.

System: The Viskr rolls Wits + Occult, difficulty 8 and spends 1 Gnosis Point. The number of successes indicates the speed with which the spirit responds. Paradox-spirits are generally not offended by the use of this Gift, unless the target is clearly no threat to the orderly progression of the universe. The punishments meted out by Paradox-spirits range from merely annoying to instantly fatal, depending upon the severity of the offense. Occasionally the Paradox-spirit may abduct its target to a pocket Umbral realm to be punished for an indeterminate space of time (or until he escapes or is rescued). What the Paradox-spirit actually does when it arrives is up to the Storyteller to decide. More on the nature of Paradox-spirits can be found in *Book of the Weaver and Mage: The Ascension*.

- **Web of Illusion (Level Five)** — This powerful Gift enables the Ananasi to create an artificial reality in a secured area. The appearance, sounds, and smells are all dictated by the character's will; everyone that enters the area sees, smells, and hears the same things for the duration of the illusion. The Ananasi that creates the illusion can either remain to control the confines, or pre-program the area to react in a particular way upon a particular event; there can never be more than one pre-programmed action for any illusion.

System: The character must expend two Gnosis points, the first to create the structure of the illusion, and a second to animate anything inside it. The character must then make a Manipulation + Primal-Urge roll (difficulty 7), with each success adding to the difficulty to detect the illusion. Characters attempting to see through the illusion must make a Perception + Subterfuge roll (difficulty 5 + the Ananasi's successes, maximum difficulty of 10). Characters automatically see the illusion as it was prepared unless they have valid reason to believe otherwise. The illusion lasts a number of days equal to the Ananasi's permanent Gnosis rating.

Wyrsta

- **Alter Mood (Level One)** — With this Gift, the Wyrsta is able to slightly change the emotion of one person.

The change cannot be extreme, but it allows them to distort their target's emotion slightly, making a happy man overjoyed, a sad woman depressed, or a blasé character apathetic.

System: The Ananasi must expend one Gnosis point and be within visual range of the target. The effect of this Gift lasts for one scene.

- **Beastmind (Level One)** — As the Level Two Red Talon Gift.

- **Blinding Spit (Level Two)** — The Ananasi is able to spit her venom up to twenty feet, blinding her opponent with a successful hit to the face. The venom causes a slight burning sensation, but does no real physical damage aside from temporary blindness.

System: The player spends one blood point, and must make a successful attack roll (Dexterity + Melee, difficulty 8). The victim is blinded for a number of turns equal to the number of successes on the attack roll.

- **Visceral Agony (Level Two)** — As the Level Three Black Fury Gift.

- **Aura of Ananasa (Level Three)** — There are none that can inspire fear like the Ananasi. By means of this Gift, the character can cause any affected character in the area to enter a state of extreme horror and fright. The victims do not automatically panic, unless something (which can be anything from a loud noise to a gentle scrape on the flesh) sets them off. Of course, once one of them gets started, they all tend to go nuts quickly.

System: The player makes a Manipulation + Primal Urge roll (difficulty 7), and expends one Gnosis point, creating tension and near-panic in anyone within a hundred-foot radius. Supernatural characters may resist with Willpower (difficulty 7) to avoid the effects.

- **Tick Body (Level Three)** — As the general Gift.

- **Web Snare (Level Three)** — The Wyrsta using this gift spins a web trap, which will trigger under the right set of circumstances, capturing an opponent.

System: The character spins a series of webs that are invisible to the naked eye, placing them in a certain location; this costs one blood point. The snare can be used to trap a target, or to haul a target into the air or into a more lethal trap. In order to properly hide a Web Snare, the character must roll Wits + Subterfuge, difficulty 7. Only one success is needed.

- **Blades of the Mantis (Level Four)** — The character using this Gift grows longer arms, with long, wickedly sharp blades, much like those of a praying mantis.

System: The player spends one blood point; the character's first set of arms grows by roughly two feet, developing scythelike blades which do Strength + 5 aggravated damage. The length and sharpness of these blades makes them particularly easy to use (difficulty 5 to attack).

- **Wither Limb (Level Four)** — As the metis Gift.

- **Razor Webs (Level Five)** — By employing this Gift, the Ananasi can coat a target or person with very strong, very thin, razor-sharp webs, causing severe damage to anything that touches them.

System: For every blood point the character spends, she generates enough of these webs to cover a Crinos-sized target. If the target is simply a doorway or the like, the web remains intact until it is attacked and suffers six health levels of damage; however, anyone so much as brushing up against the web takes an unsoakable health level of damage (and accordingly more, depending on how fast and hard the person hits the web).

If the target is a living being, any motion uses the target's Strength against them to cause damage. The character attempting to break the webbing rolls their own Strength as a damage pool, and takes the result as unsoakable damage. If he survives, he may then roll Strength to try to break the web. Once enough damage is done, the web shatters. All damage done by these webs is aggravated.

- **Summon Net-Spider (Level Five)** — As the Glass Walker Gift.

Rites

The ceremonial magic of rites is very different from the power of Gifts. Gifts are designed to create immediate effects for the individual Ananasi, while rites are more long-term, ritualistic ceremonies that create lasting effects for the Ananasi and his relationship with Ananasa.

The Garou have far more rites than the Ananasi. While their wolfish cousins think that these rituals bring them closer to their gods and spirits, and link them all as a familial tribe, the Ananasi have no such belief; they are sure they are the chosen Children of Ananasa, and that they all follow her dictates. The rites that they learn and utilize are designed to better them personally, and the Ananasi as a whole.

The Ananasi perform many rites alone, usually in the privacy of their own Sylie. The exceptions are usually designed to bring the Ananasi together under peaceful conditions for the benefit of all. Rites are interactive ceremonies that take time, preparation, and sometimes sacred artifacts that can form the cornerstone for a character's life. Rites should never be cast aside in a casual manner, but instead worked into the chronicle as a major story element or motif.

In game terms, the guidelines set up for rites in *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* still hold true. Each rite takes a minimum of ten minutes of ceremony to enact, though most do not need all the celebrants usual for Garou rites. The werespider must arrange for appropriate space and preparation, though many times that entails a simple adjustment to their Sylie. The Ananasi are a very structured society, and they take the rites that connect them to the Great Mother very seriously.

The look and action of an Ananasi rite is very different from the rites of any of the other Changing Breeds. Many of the Ananasi rites do not involve the dancing and tribal ceremonies of their distant cousins. The spiderlings instead rely upon very controlled and calculated gestures and movements that are designed to simulate many of the historical moments in Ananasi lore. To the Children of Ananasa, this is a ceremonial dance, to any outsider it appears as very stoic, cold, repetitive motions. Most of the time, the Ananasi perform these rites in Pithus

form, returning to the closest thing they have to the original form that Ananasa created for them — and woe to anyone that might happen upon these sacred communions.

Shared Rites

The following rites are shared by the Ananasi and the Garou; the rules and effects remain the same, although the actual form of the rite differs greatly.

First Rites:

Rite of the Questing Stone, Breath of Ananasa (Breath of Gaia), Rite of Silence

Triumvirate Rites:

The Rite of Binding, Fylfot's Rite (Rite of the Fetish)

First Rites

Before Ananasi are released into the world, the teachers that have been brought together to show them the way of Ananasa take the time to teach them the rites that they will need to establish themselves as a part of the Great Web. These are not complicated rites, but they are designed to grow with the spider as she finds her way on Earth.

The Rite of Spinning

Level One (Mystic)

Once the spiderling has found her place in the world, she must then tie it into the Great Web. The first rite taught to any Ananasi is the Rite of Spinning. This rite creates the haven that allows Ananasa to communicate with her children, as well as allowing the Ananasi to speak with the others of her kind through the Great Web by creating her place of solitude, the Sylie. The Sylie looks like a vast cobweb, spun in any of a number of styles, placed in a secluded corner of the character's abode, usually the tops of trees, deep in a cave, an attic, or even a closet. The character is able to directly communicate with the two Ananasi closest to her geographically, sending messages on an almost telepathic level; these messages can only be directly communicated if the other Damhàn is also inside her Sylie. The character can also extend knowledge through the Great Web by tapping into the vast resource of knowledge that resides in its strands. Once inside the strands, the character can obtain or leave knowledge as the Storyteller sees fit. Any communication with Ananasa must be initiated by the Great Mother. Over the course of their lives Ananasi perform this rite many times, whenever they move to a new home, or whenever they advance in Rank, re-establishing themselves on the Great Web.

System: The character must undertake a week of purification, removing all outside objects from the area that is going to become the Sylie and spending most of her time guarding and protecting the area from any outside influence. The player must roll Intelligence + Occult against a difficulty of 10. Each day of undisturbed fasting and meditation reduces the difficulty by 1, down to a minimum of 4. The character must then spend four Gnosis points. If successful, the character can now build a Sylie. This Domain exists both in the physical world and in the

Umbra, although it doesn't appear to be anything more than a mass of cobwebs to mundane senses. Each success on the roll reduces the difficulty to crawl sideways in the immediate area — for the Damhàn alone — by 1.

The weaving of the Sylie takes a number of hours equal to the square footage of the area that will become the Sylie. During this time, nothing can interrupt the Ananasi or the character must start the ritual over again from the beginning.

Tapping Ananasa's Wisdom

Level Two (Accord)

Mother is knowledge. When the need arises to learn new Gifts, there is only one source to provide them, and that is Ananasa herself. This special rite opens the Ananasi to learning new Gifts through the connection in his Sylie. The Ananasi must seclude himself in his Sylie, and begin the ritual to await the Great Mother's attention. If Ananasa grants her attention to the spiderling, then the learning of the Gift can begin. Once Ananasa has brought her attention to the Ananasi, he must practice the Gift until it meets the Great Mother's approval — and Ananasa is a very exacting teacher.

System: The Ananasi makes a successful Charisma + Rituals roll (difficulty 7). The Ananasi must bring something of personal value — a cherished memento, perhaps even a Fylfot — that disappears during the course of learning the new Gift. Once the object has disappeared, the young spider knows that he has performed the Gift satisfactorily. This might take a short time — a couple of hours or so — but normally takes a much longer period. Ananasa is not easy to please. However, the time typically shortens if the object presented is particularly important to the supplicant.

Recorder

Level Two (Mystic)

The Ananasi using this rite can create a simple web that acts as a recording device. The webbing is sound-activated and simply records and stores up to one hour of sounds, much like a tape recorder. The webbing can then be "played" back at any time, and can even be moved before it is used.

System: The web is sensitive and "intelligent" enough not to record random noises, but rather to record what it is made to record, such as conversations, or specific noises like the howls of wolves. Everything else works as per a standard mystic rite.

Rite of Appeal

Level Two

Though it is Queen Ananasa who decides when a Damhàn has reached the proper knowledge and wisdom for an increase in rank, the Ananasi may call to her if they feel they have been overlooked. (It's generally considered appropriate to remind Mother that you've been very good lately, especially if you really have been.)

System: The Ananasi must remain holed away in his Sylie for two days in preparation — fasting and meditating — for the Appeal. Once the time is right, the character

spends two Gnosis to establish a connection to the Mother-Queen and then speaks to Ananasa — who does indeed listen — and recites the list of accomplishments and goals achieved for the further honor and glory of the Mother-Queen.

If the character has indeed reached the proper levels of Renown, Queen Ananasa will reward them with the new Gifts and markings that indicate a higher rank. If not, the character may find himself saddled with a new task which will provide no Renown, as punishment for his hubris.

Guardians

Level Three (Caern)

The Ananasi are very protective of their personal space, especially where their Sylie is located, and often have a few surprises waiting in their special places for unwanted guests. Ananasi using this rite can take the bodies of previous victims or even their own molted exoskeletons and set them up as a defensive perimeter in and around their special places. More often than not these guardians are buried or hidden — walking into an apartment and finding gigantic spider carapaces or rotting corpses is blatant on a level most Anansi try to avoid. But once “activated” by the intrusion of anyone who doesn’t belong in the area these automatons immediately attack, using the simplest of methods to defend the lair of their creator.

System: The Damhàn must spend one blood point and one Gnosis on each of the guardians created, preserving the remains and animating them with the energies they will need to fight against intruders. The physical statistics of these guardians are about half those they had in life, and despite their appearance, they have no real intelligence. Mind-affecting Gifts do not affect them. They must be completely destroyed before they will stop.

Triumvirate Rites ***The Gathering Children***

Level Three (Accord)

In times of great need, an Ananasi may call a gathering of others to meet in person rather than share ideas through the Great Web. This rite is spread through the Great Web, and not only informs other Ananasi of the meeting, but also of the reason behind the call. The Ananasi are not a petty or impetuous breed, so this rite is performed only in dire circumstances. Any spider that uses this rite without just cause is likely to be met by a group of angry cousins. The location of the meeting can never be far from the Sylie that the Ananasi used to issue the request.

System: The player must make a successful Charisma + Rituals roll; the difficulty is



determined by the number of Ananasi that the character is attempting to call. This rite allows the Ananasi to call any spider in the Great Web.

Number	Difficulty
1-5	6
6-12	7
13-25	8
26-49	9
50 or more	10

Rite of One

Level Five (Mystic)

The sacred Rite of One is a powerful rite taught only to the most trusted Ananasi. With this rite three Ananasi can join into one being, becoming an avatar of the Mother-Queen. One must be Tenere, one Kumoti and one Hatar. This rite may only be performed in one of the sacred places, special locations in the Umbra where the Damhàn teach their young about the ways of the Ananasi.

System: Each of the three chosen Ananasi breaks down into the Crawlerling form, offering themselves to Queen Ananasa, who then takes over the three bodies, using them as her link to her Children. When she appears, she is simultaneously hideous and magnificent to behold. While she is present, Ananasa assesses her new Children and decides which aspect each will follow. One Gnosis point is taken from each of the Damhàn present, drawn from them by force, in order to allow the Mother-Queen to appear. No rolls are necessary for this rite, as Ananasa herself decides when this rite will be performed.

Every Ananasi meets the Queen at least once in their lives. Though there are no physical changes in the hosts of Ananasa, the spiritual impact of hosting even a fragment of her consciousness is considered a blessing.

Viskr Rites

The Viskr have a special place among the aspects. They are the Balancers, the Weavers and Unweavers of things that have to be repaired. For that reason, Queen Ananasa grants them special rites to aid them in maintaining or restoring the Balance. They are Ananasa's first line of attack in the unending struggle to restore cosmic Symmetry. Many of their rites are very powerful, and require a great deal of their energy and time. All Viskr rites are treated as mystic rites.

Studying the Great Web

Level One

Using this rite allows the Viskr to examine the Great Web as a whole, literally seeing the universe as it truly is. The image is not exact — the Ananasi, despite their detached state of mind couldn't handle that much information, or the greater truths of reality — but does give an indication of what and where the Viskr should concentrate their efforts to restore Symmetry.

System: While in her Sylic, the Viskr consumes certain salts and herbs to enter an altered state. Over the course of the next two days, spent in meditation and prayer, the most immediate threats to the Great Web's Symmetry are revealed in symbolic visions to the Ananasi. Those threats must be considered and interpreted by the Viskr before any actions are taken. It is not uncommon for several Viskr to get together after using this rite, the better to compare notes and interpret what they have seen.

Summon Paradox

Level One (Mystic)

The Viskr have an... understanding with Paradox-spirits. They see things in much the same way that the Weaver's own antibodies do; basically, if something shouldn't be there, it's offensive and must be punished. Though they cannot command the Paradox-spirits, they can call things to their attention, and they often do so. This powerful rite simply marks something as "wrong." Once that's done, the Paradox-spirits decide what to do about the matter.

System: The ritemaster rolls Wits + Occult, difficulty 6, and makes a mark on the target by touching it. In cases where the target is human or a mage, full contact must be made, even if it's only a handshake or a light brush against the target. Each success increases the chances that a Paradox-spirit will react immediately to the situation, meting out punishment for any Paradox the mage — or other entities, such as spirits which should not be in the physical Realm — has accrued. In the case of mages, the Paradox-spirits exact revenge as they always have. In the case of spirits, Paradox-spirits normally shove them back into the Umbra rather abruptly. In the case of mundane targets, the rite simply makes the chances of phenomenal good luck, or equally outrageous bad luck, less likely.

Rite of Weaving

Level Four

The Viskr using this rite can alter reality in minor ways, by reweaving the Great Web to accommodate her desires. This ability can't alter the past, but it can rewrite the present in minor ways. A person who is almost certain to die can be healed of the worst of the life-threatening wounds, and be given a much greater chance of surviving the damages inflicted. A stock that should be plummeting in a stock market crash can be kept from certain fiscal disaster — presuming the rite is begun and completed in time.

The downside of this ability is that reweaving reality is much like human mages' power of true magic; reweaving the Great Web is not a power that the Weaver has granted, and the Viskr who uses this rite runs the risk of attracting Paradox-spirits, the antibodies of the Great Web.

System: The player must spend three Gnosis points as well as roll Intelligence + Occult, difficulty 9. Each success allows the Viskr to carefully reach out to the Great Web, touching the strands and moving them to where they need

to be to alter the reality of the situation. One success would be enough to maintain an injured life that is on the edge of death; five successes would heal virtually all of the wounds, but would still leave very serious scars. A botch instantly attracts a Paradox-spirit.

The full power of the rite is left to the Storyteller to adjudicate, but we recommend that the rite be left incapable of doing anything that a Level Three Gift or so couldn't accomplish. Healing wounds and popping locks is fine; healing fomori and creating zombies is far too much. The more blatant the change in reality, the more likely a Paradox-spirit is to come and punish the Viskr for his presumption — in other words, the spirit might arrive whether the roll botches or not. The precise odds are left to the Storyteller's discretion; it's easy enough to tell when a Viskr has dared too much.

Fylfot (Fetishes)

Fylfot are similar to Garou fetishes, with a few notable differences. The Ananasi prefer manmade items that have been imbued with spirits; such innocuous objects are easier to carry in the world of man, where the Ananasi are most likely to need them. Also, the spider is a trapper, not a negotiator, and the spirits that inhabit these items are rarely placed there by choice; if a werespider creates a Fylfot version of a fetish, the Gnosis rating will tend to be one higher than the original fetish's rating.

Perhaps most noticeable is the fact that the Ananasi refuse to use a spirit-imbued weapon. There is no werespider equivalent to the klaive, nor do any of the spiderlings want to own one. They claim that relying on fetish weapons proves that you have forgotten how to use your intellect. Even the Myrmidon prefer using their natural talents and cunning over an external weapon.

Another difference that helps distinguish a Fylfot is the concept of uniqueness. Most of the items that the Ananasi use are one-of-a-kind. They consider it insulting to duplicate another's Fylfot, and strive to create or obtain a unique magical item. To the last, they all enjoy obtaining and owning a Fylfot object, and love to create one that they can attach their name to for future use.

The following are just a few sample Fylfot. Many are constructed using the same techniques for creating a fetish, while others are simply magical toys that the Ananasi have discovered. Whatever the case, these items and the other Fylfot are things that any creatures capable of using fetishes can use — though some will be loath to even touch them.

The Armoire of Abiele

Level 1, Gnosis 5

Never go out under- or overdressed. That was the basic motto of Abiele Dumont, a fashion designer from the 19th century, who took the message very literally. She created a classic French armoire that contained everything that she would ever need to wear, literally. By whispering a simple

request into the armoire's keyhole (thus activating the Fylfot) and then opening the doors, the owner can find the perfect clothes for whatever the situation the owner was seeking.

The clothing from the armoire is always crafted of silk (lending credence to the theory that the armoire is filled with Spider-spirits that weave each outfit). It always fits perfectly, and is typically appropriate for either male or female attire. The armoire itself is four feet wide, two and half feet deep, and almost seven feet tall. It appears to be crafted from mahogany, and is accordingly quite heavy.

Arnoch's Bait

Level 2, Gnosis 6

Arnoch, it is said, was a perpetually hungry spider, and he could never find food with the ease that he wanted, so he developed the proper bait. Arnoch's Bait is actually an enchanted tin, looking very much like a classic snuff tin, that allows its user to withdraw a small piece of bait, shaped almost exactly like a lemon drop. This bait attracts any food in the area that the Ananasi can see. If the Ananasi places the bait in front of her — on the ground, on a table, anywhere solid — and asks anything that he can see to come pick it up, they will. For that brief moment they lose control of their actions and come to pick up the bait. What the Ananasi does once they pick up the bait is entirely up to her.

In game terms, the Ananasi must place the bait on a surface, and activate the fetish; the target must roll Will-power (difficulty 5 + the successes on the activation roll, maximum of 9) to resist. Failure indicates that the target comes over and picks up the bait. The bait is quite edible, and tastes exactly like what the target enjoys, from sugar to excrement, depending on personal taste. Only one piece of bait may be drawn from the box per day; it takes a full 24 hours for the box to create a new bait drop.

Caen's Lace Kerchief

Level 2, Gnosis 6

Leave it to a Welsh dandy to bind a spirit into a handkerchief. It is also said that this particular dandy had a true taste for blood, and would feed for his own pleasure rather than need, but needed something to hide his actions. This coarse lace handkerchief was his solution.

When placed over the skin, if a character bites through the lacing it will not leave a mark, and will heal the puncture almost instantly. The owner need not make any roll to use this item, but must place the kerchief over the skin before making the wound; if the kerchief is placed over an already existing wound, it will do nothing except become blood-stained. The character must attack through the openings in the lace; if he accidentally breaks the lacing then the Fylfot loses its enchantment until it is repaired. Any attack made through the lace heals when the kerchief is removed, but the holes in the lace are only large enough for small puncturing weapons. Any health levels of damage sustained remain, but the surface area is repaired when the kerchief is removed.





The Ruby Eye of Tomas

Level 2, Gnosis 6

"The eyes of Tomas are everywhere," or at least so boasted the creator of this Fylfot. This enchanted gem grants clairvoyant vision, allowing an Ananasi to see things from a distance. The gem appears to be a smooth-cut ruby about half an inch in diameter, and has been found set in a necklace, a ring, on a scepter, and floating loose in a pile, but it has always functioned perfectly in any setting.

In game terms, the possessor of the Eye is able to see through the gem as though they were looking through a glass, with slight distortion, in a three-hundred and sixty degree arc. The owner simply has to stare into a mirror and activate the fetish; this allows him to link with the gem and look around any given area within a mile as though he were in the room. No sound is carried through the gem, only visuals — and of course, as it's viewed through a ruby, the vision is tinted red.

The Music Box of Chien-Tu

Level 3, Gnosis 6

Chien-Tu Phillips was the son of a Chinese immigrant and a San Francisco lawyer, who liked nothing more than peace and quiet. His mother and father seemed to enjoy nothing more than arguing all hours of the day, and he got

to hear it all through the time he grew up. Once he was out of the house, and his true heritage was revealed to him, he took the steps necessary to ensure his sanity. This magical music box creates a calming, soothing song that fascinates anyone that hears it.

When the box is opened, characters must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) or fall into a state of calm relaxation. Characters effected by this music cannot act out of anger, and cease all hostilities while under its spell. The music is even powerful enough to quench the Rage of a Garou or other Ovid; in this case, the Ananasi opening the box must roll the Gnosis of box, with the difficulty being the Rage of the targeted character. Every success subtracts one temporary Rage point, and the target must then must make a Willpower roll as above to see if he is calmed.

Piccola's Picture Frame

Level 4, Gnosis 7

A romantic by the name of Rena Piccola developed this Fylfot for reasons of relative triviality (at least by Ananasi standards). Piccola, though desperately romantic, was also highly jealous, so she created this device that would let her keep track of her lover at all times. By placing a well-crafted image — a painting, charcoal drawing, photograph, etc. — in this large wall frame, the owner is able to know the exact location of the person depicted. If there is more than one

person in the image in the frame, the Fylfot does not function at all.

To use the frame, the owner must place the image in the frame, hang the frame on a wall, and stare at it while concentrating on the person. The Ananasi then makes a Gnosis roll, with the difficulty equal to the target character's Willpower. If successful, the Ananasi gets a mental image of where the character is and what he is doing. The werespider doesn't receive directions to the location, or any more information about the location than the image and possibly a name (not all places have a name; Joe's Bar does, Mike's bathroom doesn't). The frame cannot relate dialogue, though the character might get a vague impression of what the conversation is about, if the target is sufficiently engrossed in the discussion. In all, the information is moderately vague, but includes enough details to make things interesting.

Skeleton Closet Key

Level 4, Gnosis 7

There are skeletons in everybody's closets, and this is the key to unlock them. Anyone who holds the key reveals their deepest secret to the owner of the key, whether they want to or not. No one knows who created this key, and there are many that feel this Fylfot is too dangerous and frightening to own. Others, of course, seek its owner their entire lives in order to puzzle out its mysteries. The Key looks like a five-inch, archaic key made out of cured bone. No one knows what type of bone it is, but it has allegedly been around since the dawn of man.

Once an Ananasi has bonded with the Fylfot, anyone that subsequently holds the key will reveal one secret to its

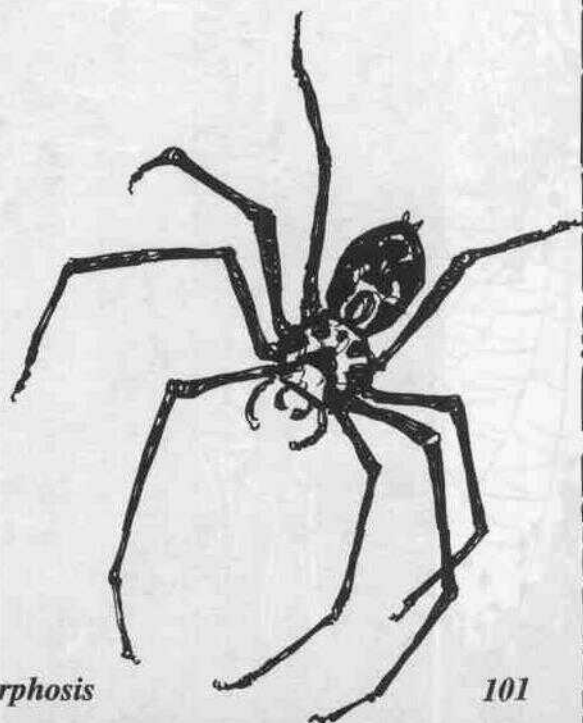
owner; if the owner doesn't ask directly, the holder will reveal the one thing that they hold most secret. When anyone other than the owner holds the key, they must make a Willpower roll, difficulty equal to the key owner's Gnosis. If the holder of the key gets less than three successes, they tell a secret to the owner of the key, but not the deepest secret they know. If the holder gets no successes, they cannot resist relating their deepest, most feared secret. If they get more than three successes, they are able to resist the lure of the key, and keep their secrets to themselves. Many Ananasi know of this Fylfot, and avoid touching it at any cost.

The Watch of Second Sight

Level 5, Gnosis 8

Some will tell you that this is the most powerful Fylfot ever made. An old pocketwatch, with elaborate inlay crafted in brass, this Fylfot keeps perfect time. It also allows its owner to look into the past. The owner of the watch is able to view the recent events of an area by activating the mechanism's inner workings. Some say that the craftsman was able to capture a Paradox-spirit, allowing him or her to break the walls of reality and glimpse the actions and events of the area.

The owner of the watch is the only one able to use the item. Every success on the activation roll allows the owner to see up to five minutes into the past. The effect of the watch is such that the events of the past are played out around the owner, almost like a ghost play, with immaterial actors on a phantom stage. The Storyteller must be extremely careful if they allow this Fylfot into their campaign; this is a mystery-buster of the highest degree.





Appendix One: A Thousand Fangs

New to the Web

The youngest Ananasi are very much worth watching. The homids among them, just fresh from the Metamorphosis, still retain some vestiges of their human emotion, and can thus approach their tasks in more innovative directions than might their more conservative elders. The spider-born are little different — they still react from instinct on a regular basis, and many of them are far less patient than their relatives.

As the Apocalypse draws nearer, the Mother-Queen is flexing her legs and pulling on more webstrands, gathering her children to her. Elder Ananasi are beginning to fall into position, to play the roles ordained for them long ago — but these elders can't do it all on their own. The young Ananasi, the ones who are still far from infamous: They are the ones with the power to shift the Balance. They are the last hope for Symmetry in a world that still lives.

Exterminator (Agere)

Quote: Cockroaches? Not a problem, ma'am. You might want to leave for a couple of hours, though; the methods we use aren't always pretty. Don't worry, though; they're all-natural.

Prelude: When you first emerged from the egg sac, you knew that you were different. Your body grew quickly, fed by your brothers and sisters, and by your hunger for death. As your body grew, so did your prey, and you moved from hunting insects to birds and lizards, to dogs and cats, and then to deer, elk, and even the occasional moose.

Then, things changed. You were brought before the elders, and you beheld the wonders of Ananasi. Your desires changed,



Ananasi

ANANASI		
Name:	Breed: Arachnid	Nature: Predator
Player:	Faction: Hator	Demeanor: Curmudgeon
Chronicles:	Aspect: Agere (Myrmidon)	Concept: Exterminator
Attributes		
Physical	Social	Mental
Strength: ●●●●●	Charisma: ●●●●●	Perception: ●●●●●
Dexterity: ●●●●●	Manipulation: ●●●●●	Intelligence: ●●●●●
Stamina: ●●●●●	Appearance: ●●●●●	Will: ●●●●●
Abilities		
Talents	Skills	Knowledges
Alertness: ●●●●●	Animal Ken: ●●●●●	Computer: ●●●●●
Athletics: ●●●●●	Drive: ●●●●●	Engineering: ●●●●●
Brawl: ●●●●●	Etiquette: ●●●●●	Investigation: ●●●●●
Dodge: ●●●●●	Firearms: ●●●●●	Law: ●●●●●
Empathy: ●●●●●	Leadership: ●●●●●	Linguistics: ●●●●●
Expression: ●●●●●	Male: ●●●●●	Medicine: ●●●●●
Intimidation: ●●●●●	Performance: ●●●●●	Occult: ●●●●●
Primal-Urges: ●●●●●	Repair: ●●●●●	Politics: ●●●●●
Streetwise: ●●●●●	Stealth: ●●●●●	Rituals: ●●●●●
Subterfuge: ●●●●●	Survival: ●●●●●	Science: ●●●●●
Advantages		
Backgrounds	Gifts	Gifts
Contacts: ●●●●●	Resist Toxin	
Fyrfot: ●●●●●	Blood of Pain	
Rites: ●●●●●	Open Seal	
Health		
Reason	Blood Pool	Health
Obdurate (Weaver)	●●●●●●●●	Brained ☐
●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	Hurt -1 ☐
Caring (Worm)	●●●●●●●●	Injured -1 ☐
●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	Wounded -2 ☐
Whimsy (Wisp)	●●●●●●●●	Maddened -3 ☐
●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	Crippled -5 ☐
		Incubated ☐
Willpower		
Rank: ●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	Experience
	●●●●●●●●	

putting you in a situation to discover what hunting and death could truly bring. The role of a human — as disgusting as it seemed a short time ago — was the perfect disguise for your needs. But once you were among them, you would have to find the proper place to explore your new desires.

It wasn't as difficult as you thought. There were signs and commercials, all looking for someone to act as an exterminator. They wanted someone to come and kill all of the pests around them. How perfect. You can eliminate insects for money, and then do the same for humans.

They want to hire a killer? They can hire a killer. The target isn't the question, only the price — and the thrill.

Concept: You are an exterminator of human and insect vermin alike. You act only for the money, and then only if you are well paid. There is no challenge that you will turn down, only ones that are beneath you. Make your money, feed your need, and destroy all that you can. There is only life and death, and you are death.

Roleplaying Hints: You're a happy man. You get the best of both worlds: the life of a hunter, and a way to write off your income without reproach. Don't let anyone see the coldness behind your eyes, simply delude them into thinking that you are a laughing human. Choose your targets carefully. Research and patience are your greatest allies, and strike only when the time is right.

Equipment: Custom van, custom 9mm, pesticides, custom clothing.

Art Director (Amari Aliquid)

Quote: *That's perfect. Just the way I wanted it. But... y'know, now that I've seen it, I think that maybe we should try it another way.*

Prelude: All your life, you have tried to make things better. Oh, it wasn't that they were bad before, they just weren't quite *right*. When you were five, and you went to kindergarten, naptime was your least favorite time of day, because the teacher would never listen to your ideas on how to arrange the mats.

That didn't last long, however, and soon there were many people that were paying attention to what you did, and what you drew. They called you a prodigy, an artist's artist. The type that could easily change the world of art. You were taken out of regular school, and put into private institutes designed to nurture your natural talents. That didn't last long either.

Your teachers and your parents both started to lose patience with you. Al-

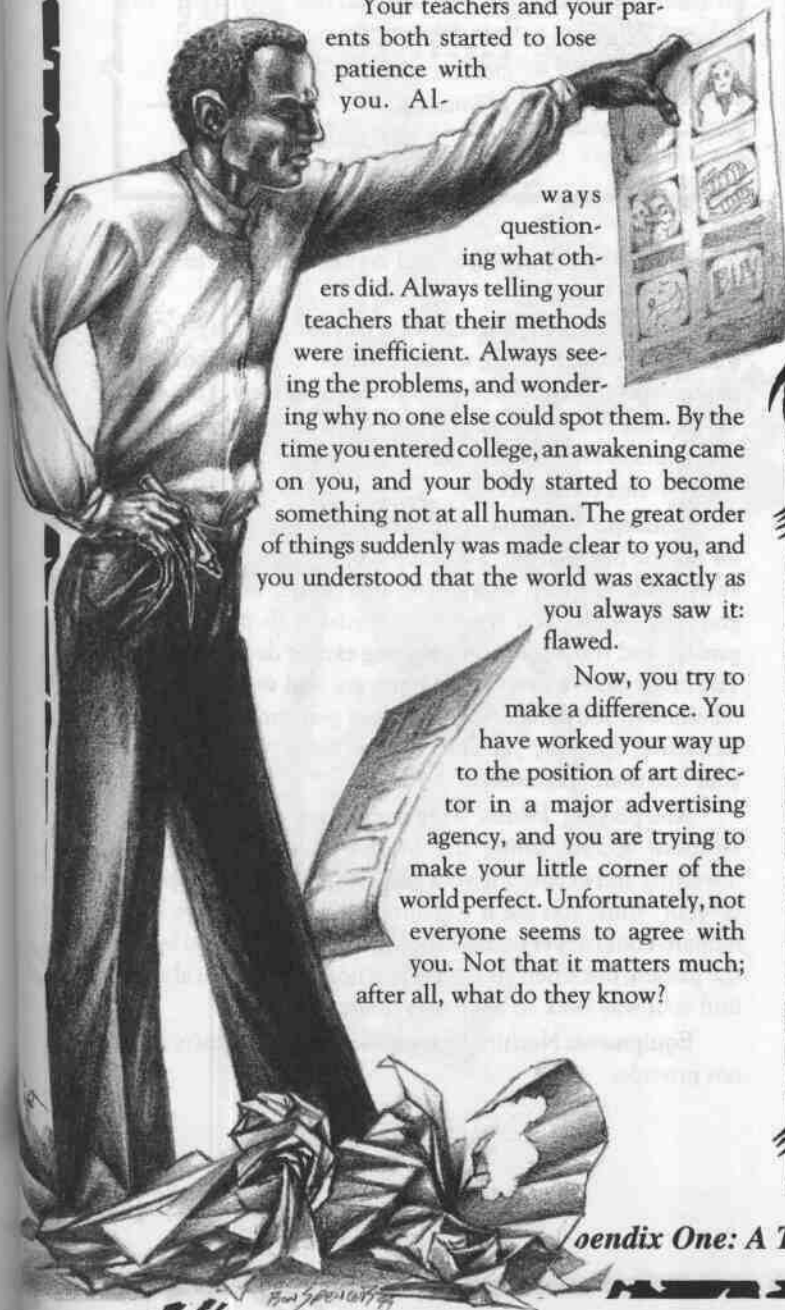
ways
question-
ing what oth-
ers did. Always telling your
teachers that their methods
were inefficient. Always see-
ing the problems, and wonder-
ing why no one else could spot them. By the
time you entered college, an awakening came
on you, and your body started to become
something not at all human. The great order
of things suddenly was made clear to you, and
you understood that the world was exactly as
you always saw it:
flawed.

Now, you try to make a difference. You have worked your way up to the position of art director in a major advertising agency, and you are trying to make your little corner of the world perfect. Unfortunately, not everyone seems to agree with you. Not that it matters much; after all, what do they know?

Concept: Although you long for order, your behavior reveals your true aspect. You constantly change things to be more "orderly" or "spotless," but it's not your fault that your definition of "orderly" changes from day to day. You're really hard to work with, but your flashes of insight and constant fussbudgeting do tend to keep your work on the cutting edge. Your subordinates and artists may want to kill you, but they can't deny that you wind up making them all look pretty good.

Roleplaying Hints: Everything that you touch has to be perfect. It isn't too difficult to try, now is it? If people don't know how to make things right, tell them. Even if they're doing all right, you can probably still give them good advice. Don't worry about making people (or other Ananasi) angry, because you are doing all of this for their own good. If they can't understand this simple fact, just explain it to them. Slowly and patiently.

Equipment: Corner office, iMac, Rolodex, cell phone, Toyota Camry.



ANANASI

Name:	Breed: Homid	Nature: Director
Player:	Faction: Kumoti	Demeanor: Director
Chronicle:	Aspect: Amari Aliquid (Viskr)	Concept: Art Director

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○	Charisma	●●●○○	Perception	●●●○○
Dexterity	●●●○○	Manipulation	●●●○○	Intelligence	●●●○○
Stamina	●○○○○	Appearance	●●○○○	Will	●○○○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledge	
Aerobics	●●●●●	Animal Ken	●●●●●	Computer	●●●●●
Athletics	●●●●●	Drive	●●●●●	Enigma	●●●●●
Beard	●●●●●	Engine	●●●●●	Investigation	●●●●●
Dodge	●●●●●	Finances	●●●●●	Law	●●●●●
Empathy	●●●●●	Leadership	●●●●●	Linguistics	●●●●●
Expression	●●●●●	Mexic	●●●●●	Medicine	●●●●●
Imagination	●●●●●	Performance	●●●●●	Occult	●●●●●
Primal Inst.	●●●●●	Repair	●●●●●	Politics	●●●●●
Steeerwise	●●●●●	Stealth	●●●●●	Rituals	●●●●●
Subterfuge	●●●●●	Survival	●●●●●	Science	●●●●●

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	
Contacts	●●●●	Balance	
Resources	●●●●	Inspire	
	●●●●	Curse of the Great Web	
	●●●●		
	●●●●		

Renewal

Obedience (Weaver)
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
Cursing (Weym)
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
Wisdom (Wyb)
● ● ● □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Blood Pool

Health

Brained		☐
Hurt	-1	☐
Injured	-1	☐
Wounded	-2	☐
Maimed	-2	☐
Crippled	-5	☐
Incapacitated		☐

-Willpower-

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

—Experience

... ..

Gardener (Gaderin)

Quote: Those are my roses. Don't stop, and don't smell them.

Prelude: You were born in a garden. You crawled on the leaves and the flowers as a youngling, not realizing your role in the world at the time. All you understood was that the flowers just felt... right.

Then the world changed. You became aware of a greater existence, and it shattered your view of things. You went from a simple creature leading a simple life, to a servant of a higher cause. It wasn't the responsibility that changed you, it was the loss of something you can never recover.

Now, you spend days upon days acting on behalf of the Mother-Queen, and you do so willingly and without hesitation, but when the opportunity arises



ANANASI

Name: Breed: Arachnid
Player: Faction: Tenere
Chronicle: Aspect: Gaderin (Wyrsta) Concept: Gardener

Attributes
Physical: Strength ●●●●●, Dexterity ●●●●●, Stamina ●●●●●
Social: Charisma ●●●●●, Manipulation ●●●●●, Appearance ●●●●●
Mental: Perception ●●●●●, Intelligence ●●●●●, Wits ●●●●●

Abilities
Talents: Alertness ●●●●●, Athletics ●●●●●, Brawl ●●●●●, Dodge ●●●●●, Endurance ●●●●●, Expression ●●●●●, Intimidation ●●●●●, Primal-Urges ●●●●●, Streetwise ●●●●●, Subterfuge ●●●●●
Skills: Animal Ken ●●●●●, Drive ●●●●●, Etiquette ●●●●●, Firearms ●●●●●, Leadership ●●●●●, Melee ●●●●●, Performance ●●●●●, Repair ●●●●●, Stealth ●●●●●, Survival ●●●●●
Knowledge: Computer ●●●●●, Enigma ●●●●●, Investigation ●●●●●, Law ●●●●●, Linguistics ●●●●●, Medicine ●●●●●, Occult ●●●●●, Politics ●●●●●, Rituals ●●●●●, Science ●●●●●

Advantages
Gifts: Eyefat ●●●●●, Mentor ●●●●●, Rites ●●●●●, Many Eyes, Patience of Ananasi, Beastmind, Resist Pain

Renown
Obdurate (Woe) ●●●●●, Cunning (Woe) ●●●●●, Wisdom (Woe) ●●●●●
Blood Pool
Gnosis ●●●●●, Willpower ●●●●●
Health
Bruised ☐, Hurt ☐, Injured ☐, Wounded ☐, Mauled ☐, Crippled ☐, Incapacitated ☐
Experience

you go back to your garden, and contemplate the life that might have been.

You have spent years creating this garden: shaping the roses to your will, trying to capture that beauty from your new perspective that you had from a smaller view. You work hard for the Ananasi, and you work hard to reclaim your old life. You don't regret either duty, but you wish that there was a way to finish them both.

Concept: You have spent years growing a rose garden for no one but yourself. You keep it where you prefer to be: away from the city, away from the prying eyes and the grabbing hands. You would do anything to protect that garden, and those roses — anything except deny Ananasi. You are reclusive even as Damhàn go, and would even be rebellious if you dared. Although your performance is never lackluster, you may yet draw trouble from your elders for your less than enthusiastic attitude.

Roleplaying Hints: Your time as a human is pure business: accomplishing the Mother-Queen's tasks, and nurturing and expanding your garden. Your time as a spider is "your" time; you use it to enjoy the garden in ways that humans could never understand. When you must, you leave the garden, but when your service is not needed, you always find your way back to your only home.

Equipment: Nothing that nature and opportunity cannot provide.

Prom Queen (Plicare)

Quote: You want to go out with me? Well, I guess you should know that I never kiss on the first date.

Prelude: Always the social butterfly, you spent your formative years flitting from boy to boy, and from outfit to outfit. You were the envy of all the girls, and the dream of all the boys. But things started to change. The thrill of the attention that once kept you alive, now barely holds your interest.

Your friends changed. They no longer wanted to be around you, and some even began to ridicule you. When you first heard them talking behind your back, you knew that you should feel pain. That this betrayal should have brought you to the edge of tears, but your eyes stayed dry. Your concern was replaced by curiosity.

The physical change was probably the most fascinating part of the experience. There was pain, to be certain, but the pain led to new and interesting organs and sensations. The

most intense sensation was discovering that you were not alone in the world.

That there were others like you — many



ANANASI		
Name:	Breed: Homid	Nature: Conniver
Player:	Faction: Tenere	Demeanor: Gallant
Chronicle:	Aspect: Plicare (Viskr)	Concept: Prom Queen
Attributes		
Physical	Social	Mental
Strength: ●●●●●	Charisma: ●●●●●	Perception: ●●●●●
Dexterity: ●●●●●	Manipulation: ●●●●●	Intelligence: ●●●●●
Stamina: ●●●●●	Appearance: ●●●●●	Wits: ●●●●●
Abilities		
Talents	Skills	Knowledges
Alertness: ●●●●●	Animal Ken: 00000	Computer: ●●●●●
Athletics: ●●●●●	Drive: ●●●●●	Enigma: ●●●●●
Brawl: 00000	Etiquette: ●●●●●	Investigation: 00000
Dodge: 00000	Firearms: 00000	Law: 00000
Empathy: ●●●●●	Leadership: ●●●●●	Linguistics: ●●●●●
Expression: ●●●●●	Melior: 00000	Medicine: 00000
Intimidation: ●●●●●	Performance: ●●●●●	Occult: 00000
Primal Urge: ●●●●●	Regist: 00000	Politics: 00000
Streetwise: 00000	Scaldr: 00000	Rituals: 00000
Subterfuge: ●●●●●	Survival: 00000	Science: 00000
Advantages		
Backgrounds	Gifts	Gifts
Mentor: ●●●●●	Stolen Moments	
Resources: ●●●●●	Groom	
	Scent of Sweet Honey	
Renown	Blood Pool	Health
Obdience (Wolver): ●●●●●	0000000000	Beasted: ☐
Caring (Worm): 0000000000	0000000000	Hurt: -1 ☐
Whim (Wub): 0000000000	0000000000	Injured: -1 ☐
	0000000000	Wounded: -2 ☐
	0000000000	Maddled: -2 ☐
	0000000000	Crippled: -5 ☐
	0000000000	Incapacitated: ☐
Rank	Willpower	Experience
0000000000	0000000000	
	0000000000	

others, all remembering what it was like to be human, but past that experience.

You aren't ready to let it pass. Being human is now something of an enigma, and if you don't explore the mystery, then it can never be solved. You were born human, and you are willing to continue the masquerade of humanity. Perhaps you can even win back your friends, and use them later in life — assuming that they live long enough to be useful.

Concept: Your mom is a sweet woman, and your dad tries to be there for you — when he's in town — but neither of them is exactly what you need right now. You need the guidance of the Great Mother, the leadership that no father can provide. You will live with your parents, but you will establish your own life, and do with it the things that you have to do. And when the time comes, you won't ever have to worry about your human parents again.

Roleplaying Hints: Move from experience to experience: not for the thrill, but for the mystery. You want to understand all that you can about the life that you will leave behind. Don't alienate anyone now, but realize that they cannot follow you into the life ahead, and they can't be left to let anyone know where you have gone.

Equipment: The proper dress, the right make-up, and the accessories to make it all come together.

Porn Star (Chymos)

Quote: *Why sure, I'd love to do a scene with you.*

Prelude: Mom always had plenty of boyfriends. It seemed like every time you came home from school that there was a new "uncle" waiting for you. Some were nice, most weren't. The worst ones would come into your bedroom at night for a few games that your mother didn't know about.

You knew that you would get out of that mess one day. In fact, you were going to go to Hollywood and become a star. You never waited for your eighteenth birthday, and ran away when you were only fifteen. Your mother probably didn't even call the police. It didn't matter, you had a plan, and you were going to set the world on fire.

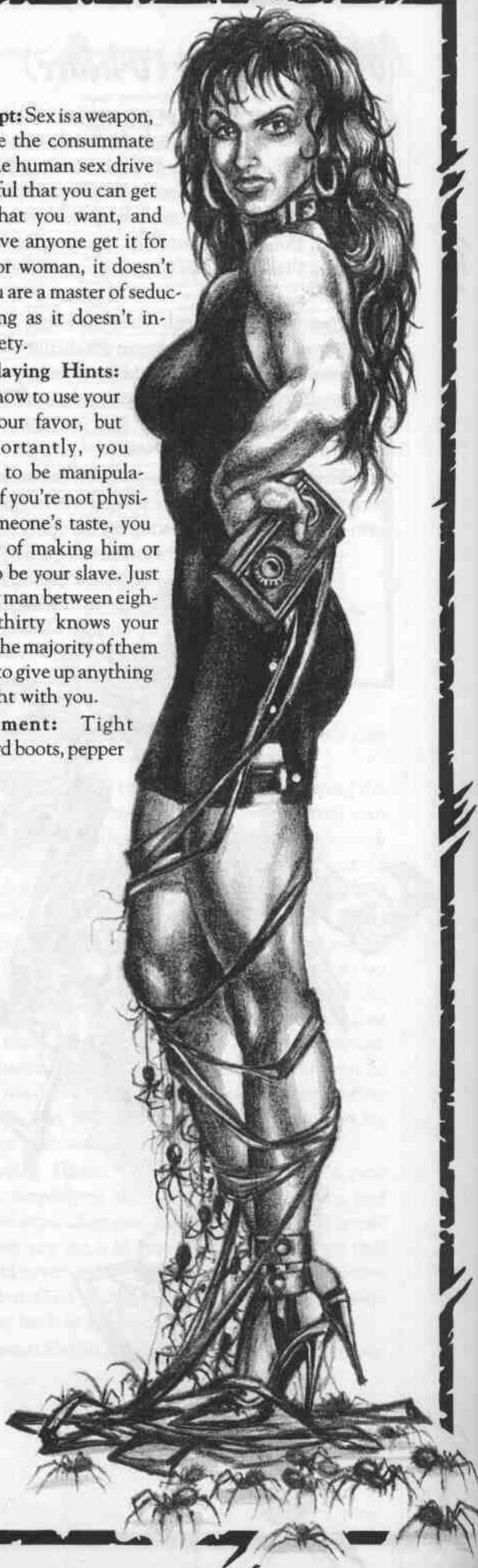
Except Hollywood wasn't quite what you expected. It seemed that some of your "uncles" had relatives on the west coast, and all they were interested in was sex. So, that's what you gave them, only this time you were well paid for your wares. To hell with them.

Things changed for you slightly when you discovered your true Mother. Suddenly there was a solid motivator in your life. A figure that you could respect and admire. You haven't changed your profession, but you have changed your outlook. Now, they aren't just screwing you, they are getting screwed by you. You have them under your control. They are your tools for conquest, and there are more of them lining up outside every appearance you make.

Concept: Sex is a weapon, and you are the consummate warrior. The human sex drive is so powerful that you can get anything that you want, and you can have anyone get it for you. Man or woman, it doesn't matter. You are a master of seduction, as long as it doesn't involve subtlety.

Roleplaying Hints: You know how to use your looks in your favor, but more importantly, you know how to be manipulative. Even if you're not physically to someone's taste, you know ways of making him or her want to be your slave. Just about every man between eighteen and thirty knows your name, and the majority of them are willing to give up anything for one night with you.

Equipment: Tight clothes, hard boots, pepper spray.



ANANASI

Name:
Player:
Chronicler:

Breed: Homid
Faction: Kumoti
Aspect: Chymos (Wyrsta)

Nature: Survivor
Demeanor: Hedonist
Concept: Porn Star

Attributes

<i>Physical</i>		<i>Social</i>		<i>Mental</i>	
Strength.....	●●●●	Charisma.....	●●●●	Perception.....	●●●●
Dexterity.....	●●●●	Manipulation.....	●●●●	Intelligence.....	●●●●
Stamina.....	●●●●	Appearance.....	●●●●	Wits.....	●●●●

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledge	
Alertness	●●●●●	Animal Ken	●●●●●	Computers	●●●●●
Athletics	●●●●●	Drive	●●●●●	Enigmas	●●●●●
Brawl	●●●●●	Etiquette	●●●●●	Investigation	●●●●●
Dodge	●●●●●	Firearms	●●●●●	Law	●●●●●
Empathy	●●●●●	Leadership	●●●●●	Linguistics	●●●●●
Expression	●●●●●	Mexic	●●●●●	Medicine	●●●●●
Intimidation	●●●●●	Performance	●●●●●	Scout	●●●●●
Primal Instg	●●●●●	Repair	●●●●●	Politics	●●●●●
Streetwise	●●●●●	Stealth	●●●●●	Rituals	●●●●●
Subterfuge	●●●●●	Survival	●●●●●	Science	●●●●●

Advantages

Backgrounds	Gifts	Gifts
Allies ●●○○○	Resist Pain _____	_____
Contacts ●●○○○	Mother's Touch _____	_____
Fylfor ●●○○○	Alter Mood _____	_____
Resources ●●○○○	_____	_____
○○○○○	_____	_____

Renovon

Obedience (Weaver)
 Caring (Weym)
 Wisdom (Wyle)

Blood Pool

Gnosis

Health

Bruised		☐
Hurt	-1	☐
Injured	-1	☐
Wounded	-2	☐
Mauled	-2	☐
Crippled	-5	☐
Incapacitated		☐

-Willcocks

Experience

100

Ananasi of Note

There are many Ananasi that are well known in the annals of the Great Web, and a few that have made a name for themselves in human society. Still, even the most famous of Ananasi is a mystery to the world as a whole — at most, they are names that sound familiar, even though one cannot place the face. Not one of these is known as an Ananasi in any circle other than that of their fellow Damhàn, of course — it would be foolish to advertise yourself to your enemies.

Jericho Euler

Plicare Governing Official

One of the most famous Ananasi that has ever lived, Jericho was the first spiderling to show that humans will accept the Children of Ananasa as one of their own — and even a leader of their kind. His actions have had a profound effect on both human and Ananasi society.

In a time before humans understood the value of structured society, Jericho stepped forward to build a city that would become famous in lore and legend. Jericho was a man that had many enemies, and he felt the best way to defend himself from those enemies was to create as many allies as he could find — and he was willing to take whatever allies were available. In a carefully executed action, he worked his way through the government of a growing city, first as an advisor, then as an aide, and finally as a leader. With each step he was able to draw more and more allies to his side, eventually giving him an army to control.



What makes this action unique was that his allies and his army were all human. He realized that the humans were easy prey in more ways than one, giving his kind an example to follow. If the Ananasi take control of humans, they can manipulate them to their advantage. The skills of the Ananasi far exceed anything that humans themselves are able to develop, and if the spiderlings are able to give of themselves, the humans will put them in positions of power, and human power is as lethal as Ananasi power.

The other lesson taught by Jericho is that power draws attention, and attention draws enemies. Jericho was charismatic enough to rise in power among humans, but that same charisma drew the jealousy of others. These are the forces that eventually destroyed Jericho, inside his fabled walled city. The Ananasi always remember the fact that one enemy can easily replace another, so it is best to control your enemies rather than create new ones.

Tomas Hogarth

Gaderin Jeweler

If you need a unique piece of jewelry, or want information on the past, there is only one person to ask: Tomas Hogarth. One of the oldest and most recognized talents among the Ananasi, this jeweler has been known to be alive since the early 1600s at least, and is the creator of the Ruby Eye of Tomas. In all that time, he has kept close track of each current owner of that famous Fylfot.



Hogarth appears to be an ancient man, easily in his eighties. Despite his frail appearance, he is still quite healthy and strong, and has been known to fight off attackers by himself without difficulty. Hogarth has used at least four different bodies throughout time, and everyone expects him to transfer to another one sometime soon.

He has created some of the most unique rings, necklaces, and bracelets that the world has ever seen — and a few of them have made it into the hands of others. Hogarth has a collection of gems and jewels that would put the crown of England to shame, and he has no intentions of giving them up. This obsession has made him a bit vulnerable to bribery, but only from other Ananasi — he does have a reputation to uphold.

Hogarth does not travel very often, preferring his home in Brussels to anywhere else. As one would expect from any Ananasi that has lived four hundred years, he is capable in almost every manner. He has also made many friends both inside and outside of spider society, and is recognized as one of the true spokesmen and ambassadors of the Ananasi.

Claudette Diderot

Amari Aliquid Gourmet Chef

They say that there is no finer dining experience in the world than visiting La Mère Jolie in Milan, Italy. The atmosphere is light and always entertaining, and the food is exceptional — just don't ask what you're eating.

Claudette is well known for traveling the world to discover the finest foods that you can eat, and in her mind all things qualify as food. She has been known to serve exotic game, rare plants, and her fair share of insects, all with such obscure names that you would be none the wiser. Case in point: the harmless sounding *Poulet Le Monde*, "chicken of the world." When you look at the dish, it appears to be an elaborate plate of roasted chicken, surrounded by roasted vegetables on a bed of wild greens, but when you bite into it there is a very different reality. The chicken has been marinated in a combination of dirt and boiled cow urine, giving the meat a very pungent taste. What's more, the stuffing is a combination of freshly ground bread crumbs, parsley, sage, chicken broth, and finely ground mealworms. None of this is on the menu, and if you were to ask about the secret of the recipe she would simply tell you that it is one of her house secrets, and it remains one of her most popular dishes.

Beyond her culinary expertise, Claudette has become one of the leading experts in the field of international affairs for the Ananasi. In her quest to find the perfect meal, Claudette has become a seasoned traveler, visiting every corner of the globe on a regular basis, searching for that unknown delicacy that has remained undiscovered. On those travels she has met many other Ananasi, and many non-Ananasi that have become some of the werespiders' most valued allies, whether they want to be or not. As she



shares quality food, Claudette also shares quality information with the people that truly need it.

Claudette is a tall, graceful black woman, with a pleasant smile always on her face. It would be a mistake to be deceived by her quiet demeanor; she is also a skilled killer that finds humans and other warm-blooded creatures a delicacy that is worth the risk in many situations. At times, she has even preyed upon cold-blooded and exotic game, both in this world and the Umbra. To her, the only crime is not taking the chance to discover something wonderful.

Christy15

Gaderin Collector

Few among the collectors of the Ananasi have garnered a reputation as strong as Christy15. Her age and appearance are a mystery — she has seldom looked the same twice. What is known about Christy is that she hunts down the sexual stalkers of the Internet; they are, after all, her latest collection. She gleefully engages in sexual fantasies on the Web, driving the stalkers to want her, and when the time is right, she reveals enough about herself to allow them to find her if they desire — and most of them do. Christy15 normally sends photos of herself in a cheerleader outfit. In all the pictures she is only around 15. Beyond those two facts, her appearance could be anything, so long as it is always attractive and always female.



Christy keeps the bones from her collection in a carefully guarded location, and is reported to sleep among them in many cases. If there are wraiths from these victims, they've yet to make their presence known to her. Some claim — normally when Christy15 isn't present — that she eats not only the flesh of her stalkers, but the souls as well.

Christy is well known among the Gaderin, and considered something of an expert in almost every field. Her collections are alleged to number in the hundreds, most of them complete.

Ronald Clement

Kar Architect

There is beauty in structure and order, and Ronald Clement is the best example of this edict. Clement is one of the top architects in the firm of *Hodgkins, Carroll, and Farris*, a firm that has become one of the leading designers of high-rise and superstructure buildings in the world. Based out of Chicago, this firm has designed some of the most prominent new features of the modern skyline, including the recent midwest headquarters for Developmental Neogenetics Amalgamated, a striking building that covers over two acres of land.

More than just a successful businessman, Clement is a faithful servant of Ananasa. His architectural motifs help to strengthen the Ananasi's hold in the world, and are always designed with elements that allow special advantages to

those that have access to eight-legged forms. These buildings are sanctuaries for the Ananasi, with special hollows and ledges that appear to be nothing more than ornamental, but provide a safe haven for spiderlings that are seeking refuge. More than that, these buildings are often designed to give the Ananasi an advantage in combat, giving vantage points to those that can more nimbly maneuver in his weblike designs.

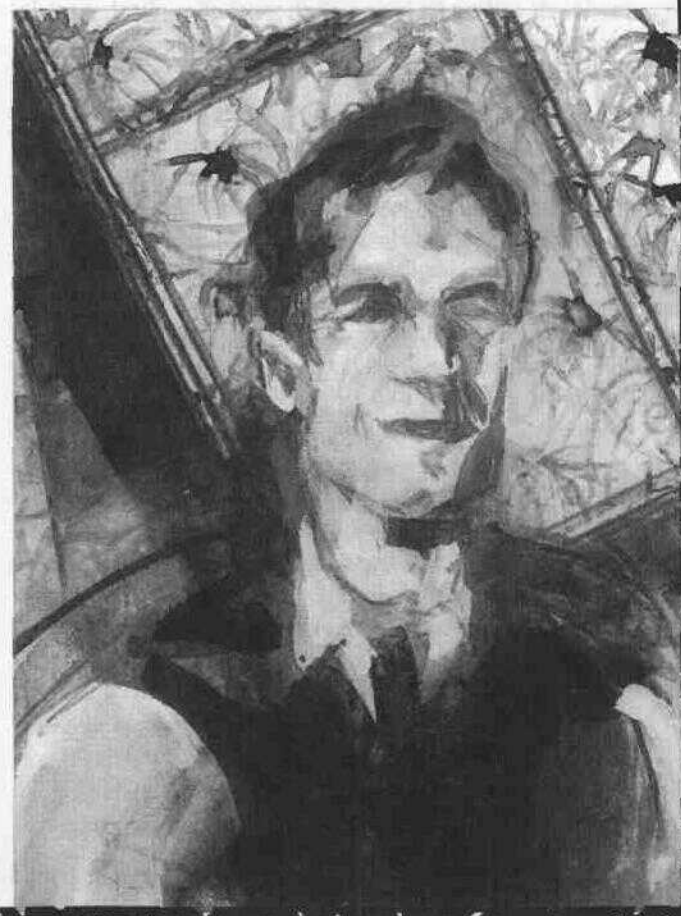
Clement appears to be a well-dressed, handsome man in his early forties. He has, in fact, been nominated for the most eligible bachelors of Chicago list several times, but has always refused to appear in any magazine. To his way of thinking, he is constantly at war. He is planning strategy and formulating plans at all times, and each of his creations is designed to give the Ananasi an advantage in what he considers an inevitable war for domination of the globe.

Tina Tyler

Anomia Receptionist

There are battles that are waged on the open field, and then there are the battles that are fought behind the lines. Tina Tyler battles for her kind from the most inauspicious of locations: the secretary's desk. In a quiet, patient manner, Tyler has worked herself up from another temp to the secretary of the vice president of international affairs for Endron International.

From her position, Tyler is able to wreak havoc upon her enemies, and keep tabs upon the world of the potential



Anansi

First of the Kumoti

Anansi was the first of Queen Ananasa's Children, and many claim he remains the wisest. When the Mother-Queen was captured by the Wyrms, it was Anansi who first found her and then tricked the Ovid into assisting in her release. Though the truth was lost a long time ago to legend, Anansi still takes the brunt of blame for triggering the First War of Rage, and for ending it for the other Ovid. His fellow werespiders hold him responsible for many of the Ananasi deaths that took place during that bloody war, but he is hailed as a hero because he managed to reestablish the contact between the Damhàn and their Mother-Queen. Anansi is famous enough to live on in the myths of many people, a trickster god of wisdom and foolishness both. He is and has always been, a rarity among his people.

Anansi is said to still live today, moving through the world and watching over the Wyld places. He is known for his wisdom, his ferocity in battle, and his ability to recover from even the worst wounds inflicted. There are many who claim they've seen him at gatherings, but, of course, it's impossible to be certain with a breed that can and often do change their appearance regularly.

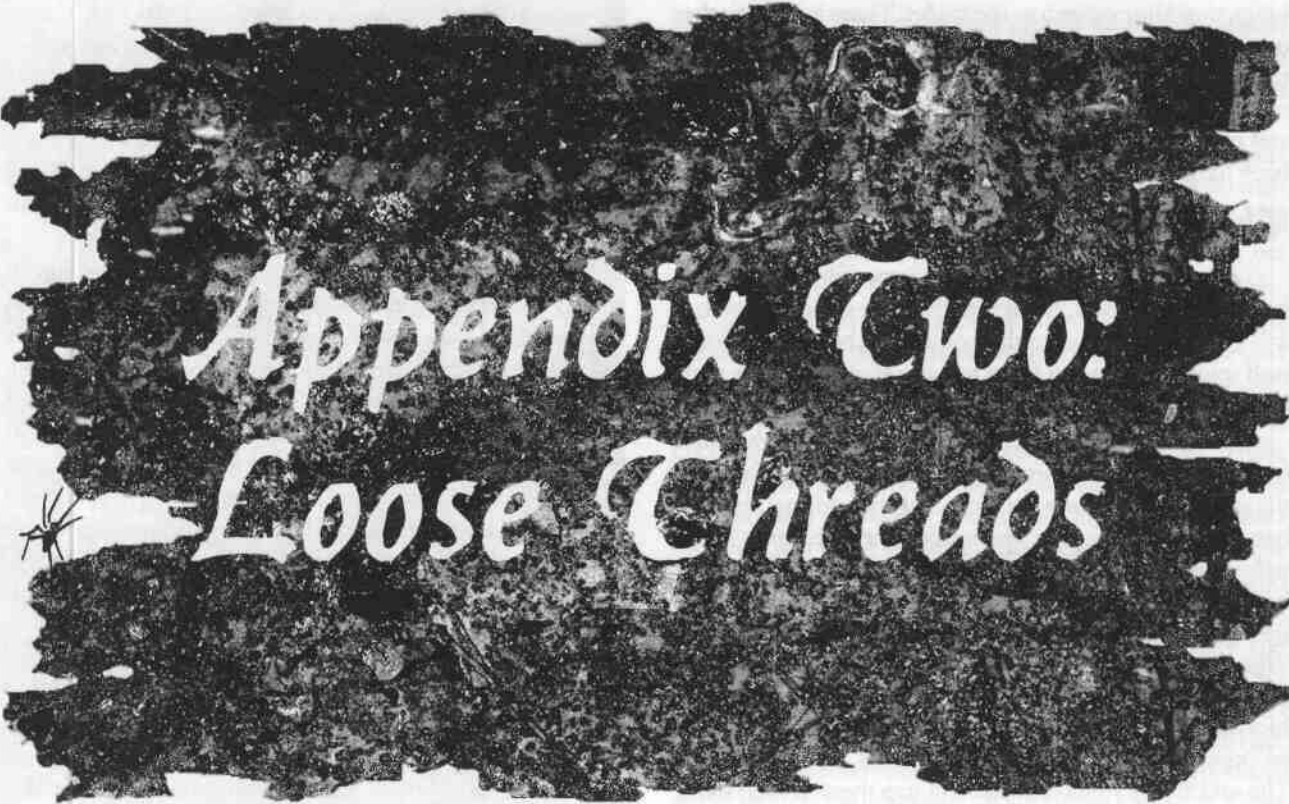


enemies of the Ananasi. All the messages that move through Endron's open channels must pass over her desk, and none of them go unnoticed. What's more, some of them are... modified, calling attention to those that might deserve it. Her time with Pentex has slowly planted the seeds of spiritual corruption in her, but for now she remains loyal to her people and to her queen.

The werewolves she works against have been searching for Tyler for years, still not knowing who it is that has gifted the higher-ups of Endron with secret information, and she has eluded them at every turn. No one knows what started this personal war with the Garou, but everyone acknowledges that it is a self-perpetuating cycle. None have ever discovered Tyler's identity; the werewolves keep thinking that it must be a person in a position of power that is causing their problems, and that is exactly what Ms. Tyler wants them to think.

Tyler is a small woman, barely over five feet tall. She has pale skin and dark hair, and always dresses in a very professional manner. If you were to meet her, you would barely realize it; she keeps such a low profile that she is almost unnoticeable.





Appendix Two: Loose Threads

Real Spiders

There is no way that we can give you all of the information about spiders that exists in the world today. There are volumes of books that are dedicated to the eight-legged sweethearts, and we have only this small space to give you some information. Still, we did want to hit some highlights to give you an idea what life from a spider's perspective is like.

The information below isn't highly technical, nor is it complete by any stretch of the imagination. This is simply a quick guide to give you some superficial facts about spiders. The idea is to give both players and Storytellers a chance to see what life is like from a smaller perspective. Use this information to enhance your character and your campaign, adding a touch of the real world to the World of Darkness. It isn't meant to be the basis for any chronicle, but can help to flesh out any story.

The Anatomy of a Spider

The spider is a member of the class Arachnida, and is collectively known as the order Araneae. Other arachnids include ticks, mites and scorpions, but the term has become so closely associated with the spider that when a person hears the word "arachnid" he automatically pictures a tarantula or black widow.

A spider consists of two major body segments: the cephalothorax and the abdomen. The cephalothorax is the smaller front portion of the spider, which is covered on the top and bottom with a hard outer covering that protects it from attack. The abdomen is the softer, larger section in the

rear of the spider. The two sections are joined by a narrow waist, giving spiders that traditional bulbous appearance. It is also in the abdomen where the spinnerets are located — the organ that helps them extract and shape their webbing.

One of the most recognizable features on spiders are their eight legs. The legs of a spider vary in length, can have up to seven segments, and can even — in some cases — regenerate after being torn from their bodies. The shape and use of these legs can play an important role in naming and classifying the creature.

The cephalothorax is a complicated area. The common belief is that all spiders have eight eyes, but that isn't the truth. Spiders can have as many as eight eyes, but there are some that have fewer; there are many spiders that have only six eyes, and they have no problem seeing their prey. Unlike an insect's eye, the spider's eye isn't multi-faceted; they see only one image from each eye. Their mouth is a fearsome thing, spawning many nightmares among children and adults alike. The mouth of a spider consists of two parts: the chelicerae and the pedipalps. The chelicerae is the inner area of the jaw, used to crush the food before it is consumed. That's right, they do eat their prey, though it has been softened and semi-digested by their toxic venom in many cases. That venom is delivered by the more disturbing mouthparts, the pedipalps. These fanglike appendages look similar to small legs, and have the openings that let the spider deliver the venom to its prey.

Spiders do indeed have lungs. There is a series of openings along the underside of the abdomen called book

lungs, providing oxygen to the spider. There is also another organ called the spiracle located at the back of the abdomen that is connected to the trachea providing another avenue of air for the spider. Most true spiders have both book lungs and trachea, although some of the smallest have lost their book lungs, and some have two book lungs and no trachea.

The Life and Death of Spiders

All spiders are born from eggs. Some gain more benefit from this than others, though, as there are some spiders that will guard the eggs up to the point that they hatch. Some wolf spiders even go so far as to carry their young on their backs until they are able to fend for themselves.

Once they have set off for themselves, they have to find food. All spiders are carnivores, and prefer to eat live food. So, the spider has to obtain his food, and they do that through hunting or trapping. The spider that everyone thinks of is a web-spinner, creating designs of silk that capture their food for them to eat. Not all spiders are web-spinners, and some simply hunt their food like any other beast of the world. Where web-spinners use lures and traps, the hunting spiders use camouflage, speed, and power to attack and kill their prey. Most spiders feed on insects, though there are some that feed on larger animals, such as fish, birds, lizards, and even snakes. The spiders that feed on snakes will trap them in their webs, surround their head with silk, and then feed off the body for days on end. Spiders are perpetually on the lookout for a meal, but if the need arises they can go weeks between meals.

Growing up for a spider is a very relative term. The smallest spider on record, the Samoan moss spider, is just over three one-hundredths of an inch in diameter, while the largest, the giant bird-eating spider, can be ten inches in diameter. A spider continues to grow throughout its life, molting its endoskeleton up to ten times to make room for growth. They grow until they've reached a point where their exoskeletons are no longer large enough to support them, then simply crawl out of the old shell. A softer underlying shell expands and hardens to accommodate their new size. More often than not, the old exoskeleton lies where it was discarded, and looks like a perfectly healthy spider that has simply died. No matter their size, the spider looks the same from birth to death, changing only in size, not in appearance.

As with all adults, there are times when the spider's thoughts turn to romance. That might sound a bit odd, but there is something of a romance to many spiders' mating rituals. Some species bring gifts to prospective mates, hoping to win their approval. Others perform complex mating dances, showing their skill and grace to win over their would-be love. Still others serenade an attractive spider, hoping to win them over with the right sound. Once they have found that special someone, the spiders mate; the same fang-like appendages that deliver venom deliver the male spider's sperm to the female, and then the little ones are on the way. Contrary to popular belief, it is not a universal practice for the female spider to attack and kill the male after mating. There are many male spiders that

die soon after mating, either as a result of a hungry female deciding they look good enough to eat (one of the reasons the Black Widow has earned her name), or because they have fulfilled their mating purpose and their internal clocks simply tell them it's time to die. This is one of the areas where many male spiders don't earn points in long lives. However, almost twice as many of the thousands of species do not suffer from this unusual problem. Many males live long productive lives.

To all things, there is an end, and for spiders that ending can be very harsh. The spider has many enemies, including birds, reptiles, mice, some insects, and their most dread foe, other spiders. Spiders are a cannibalistic bunch, and they will happily feed on each other if they can. The Padrone are an Ananasi analogue to the Portia spiders, which will attack other spiders in their own web, tricking them into thinking that they are trapped insects or other visitors. If they can survive the harsh reality of the world, the spiders can enjoy a full life — while it lasts. On average, spiders live about one to two years, but some species of tarantula live up to twenty-eight years — a long time in a difficult world.

Spiders Can Colonize

Though there are literally thousands of different types of spiders, only seven types are known to actually colonize, staying together in groups ranging from a mere dozen or so to hundreds and in rare cases, thousands. The largest of these is the Australian funnel-web spider, an arachnid around the same size as a tarantula, with highly toxic venom, that often colonizes in gatherings of up to 100 members. No studies have yet discovered whether there is a hierarchy within these colonies.

Size Matters

In most cases, the female of the species is larger and has a more toxic bite than the male, but there are exceptions. In the case of the Australian funnel-web spider, the male's venom is over eight times more powerful than that of the female, and has caused comas and even death numerous times. In most cases the male spiders are more colorful than their female counterparts, likely because they are more expendable to the race than the females, who have to protect their young.

The Spider's Web

There are three basic types of spider webs: orb webs, sheet webs, and cobwebs. The cobweb is a random pattern of webbing, filling a space with material to capture anything that might try to fly or crawl through the space. A sheet web is a flat web that normally originates from a funnel, and is generally located close to the ground to capture anything that lands on the surface. Orb webs are the "classic" style of web, appearing as a series of concentric circles built on support strands that hold the structure. None of the webs is really more effective than the others, though for aesthetic purposes, none can compare with an orb web. The orb webs can be huge, and one species of spider in South America, the *Nephila*, can weave orb webs that are up to eighteen feet across. These webs are so large and tough that some natives have used these webs





as fishing nets. One of the rare exceptions to the standard three types of webbing belongs to the net spider, which weaves a web and waits for its prey to get too close. It then literally throws out a web to catch its meal.

The elaborate designs of the webs have a very short life, and are rebuilt by the spider every day. One web with over one thousand separate attachments can be built by a spider in only half an hour. Not only are they artists, but they are efficient workers with excellent craftsmanship.

Many spiders actually recycle their old webbing, eating the old web and using the same proteins again in the new webs they produce. Orb spiders are known for this.

A spider's web is incredibly durable. Though only one micrometer in diameter, the web has a stronger tensile strength than steel, and an incredible elasticity. Webbing is made entirely of protein, starting as a liquid in the spider's abdomen and going through a chemical change to become the silky strands that the spider manipulates with the claws on the backs of his legs. There are several types of webs that one spider can create, with varying degrees of elasticity and stickiness. The web that a spider creates to capture prey is very durable and sticky. If viewed under an electron microscope, it appears to be mostly liquid, with a thin thread that folds back in on itself time and again. The web that a spider uses to create an egg sack, on the other hand, is made from a very soft, pliant webbing to keep the eggs warm and protected. Scientists have used the concept of this overlapping webbing to help create modern defenses like kevlar and similar woven products.

Other Fun Spider Facts

- There are over 35,000 spider species that have been classified in the world, with more being discovered constantly. Scientists researching spiders have found up to 2.2 million spiders in one acre of grassy land, making them a very common neighbor.

- There are spiders that live in caves, trees, bushes, grasses, and even under water, but most are found living near water. There was even a spider found living on Mt. Everest at a height of 22,000 feet, making it the sole creature found living at the highest elevation in the world.

- Some common types of spiders are black widows, brown recluses, trapdoor spiders, tarantulas, fishing spiders, crab spiders, and jumping spiders. There are numerous subspecies of these types of spiders on almost every continent in the world.

- Spiders are usually thought of as hairy beasts, but they can be either hairy or smooth-skinned.

- Spider venom is very powerful. In the same volume, black widow venom is fifteen times more deadly than that of a rattlesnake. A scientist by the name of Professor W.J. Baerg who wanted to study the effects of spider venom on a person subjugated himself to multiple spider bites over a period of a few years. It took him hours to convince a tarantula to bite him, and, though the bite was painful, it had no other effect. The black

widow bite he suffered a few months later put him in the hospital after only nine hours, where he remained under careful watch for three days. The venom of the widow isn't even the most toxic in the world; that distinction belongs to the Brazilian wandering spider. What's more, the venom of the Australian wolfspider is virulent enough to eat one centimeter of living skin a month—and there is no known medicine that can stop it.

- Spiders regenerate their limbs. If a spider loses a leg in combat or by accident, it will grow a replacement by the time it molts again. The new leg is sometimes smaller and weaker, but still functional.

- Tarantulas don't use their fangs for defense, but shoot coarse hairs out of their body to sting attackers' eyes and skin, causing severe irritation.

- The camouflage of some crab spiders is so amazing that it lets them change their outer color, much like a chameleon, when moving from plant to plant.

- Jumping spiders can clear a distance over 50 times their own length in a single leap.

- The den of the trapdoor spider is tight enough to hold out water, but sensitive enough to let the spider know when anything walks near the opening. The trapdoor spider hunts nocturnally, and the eyes of the spider will reflect light and glow red under a flashlight.

Use this information, and search out more information on your own, to enhance your chronicle in whatever way you see fit. Never let yourself get bogged down in the facts, but don't ignore them completely. We hope that this quick guide will give you an idea of what life is like from a spider's perspective. Crawl, don't run, back into the meat of this book and get to work on your own arachnid life.

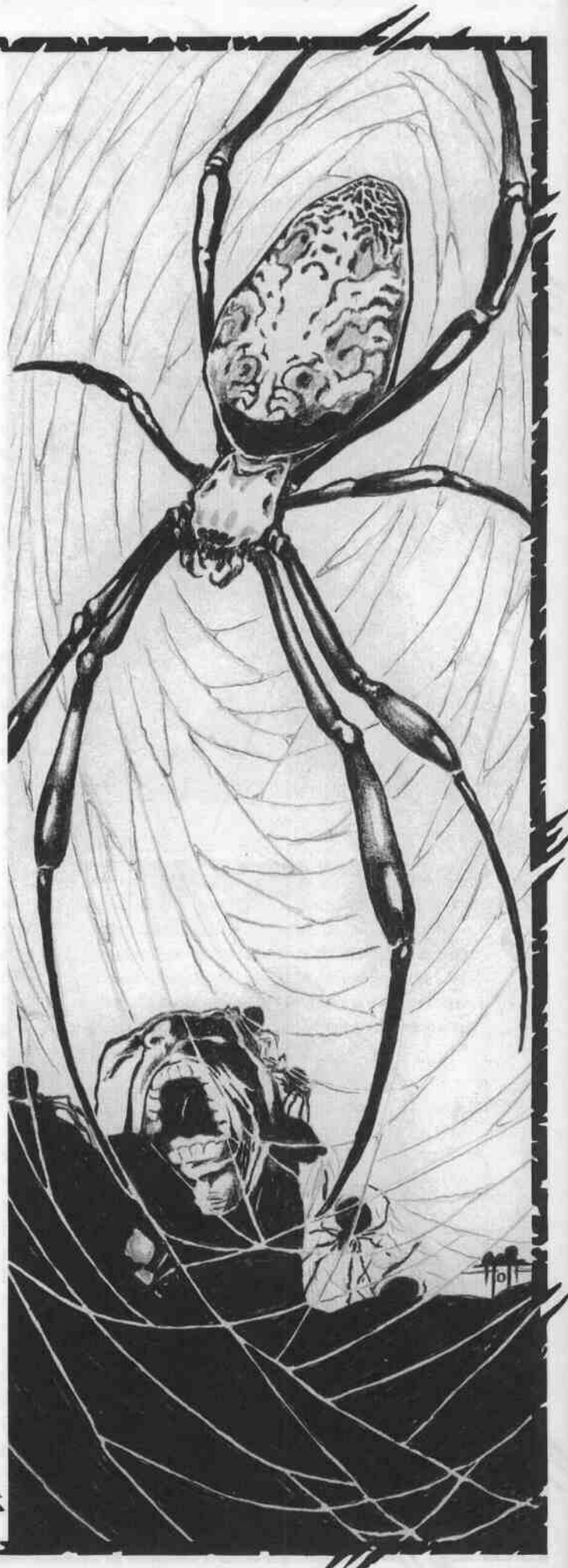
Clarifications: *The Truth Behind Belief*

Contrary to what the Ananasi might want to believe, their worldview is just as skewed as that of the Garou, the Corax and the rest of the Ovid. They've gotten numerous things right, to be certain, but their lack of emotion has not stopped their perspective from leaning away from the "truths" of the World of Darkness. Below are some clarifications on the realities of the events the teachers in this book revealed to their students.

The Triat

Actually, they pretty much got this one right. The Triat is messed up. The Weaver, the Wyrn and the Wyld are out of balance, which is precisely why there's so much going on that's wrong.

But that doesn't mean they fully understand just what needs to be done to fix things. The Ananasi are trying to restore the order, but they don't know just how that can be accomplished. The Balance they seek is not quite in their grasp, and the chances of them succeeding on their own are about the



same as the chances of the Get of Fenris adopting a policy of nonaggression towards their foes. Despite their best efforts and their own delusions, the werespiders are not infallible.

The Weaver

The Weaver does indeed seem to hold a partial grudge against the Ananasi, or, more precisely, against Ananasa. The Ananasi get away with their dealings with Weaver-spirits largely due to camouflage; most Net-spiders just aren't savvy enough to tell the difference between a Pithus and another Weaver-spirit in spider form.

The Wyrn

While the Damhàn might be able to see the forest, they often overlook the trees, at least as far as the Wyrn is concerned. Just as with all of the other Changing Breeds, the Ananasi are susceptible to the Wyrn's influence and corruption. The difference is that they seldom let their instability show as easily. The unemotional mindset of the Ananasi doesn't change when Wyrn corruption takes hold of them. The only real change is the goals they seek to achieve. For the record, it's not a question of *if* the Wyrn will corrupt Hatar, but a question of *when*. Friendly dealings with the Wyrn and its minions all but guarantee falling under the Wyrn's sway eventually. Certain Gifts and rites can slow or prevent the corruption, but only if the Damhàn is aware of them (and his corruption). Just possibly, even the corruption of her Children is another part of Ananasa's schemes.

Corrupted Hatar might not seem different on the outside, and their behavior could very well make their decisions seem as sane and rational as ever, but ultimately they're likely to wind up aiding the Wyrn in its present incarnation, rather than helping the Wyrn achieve the goals it once had. Rather than seeking to maintain the Balance, fallen Hatar begin to corrupt others and to bring about negative changes instead of destroying the items, places and people they should in order to restore Symmetry to the universe.

The saddest part is, they never even realize they've been corrupted. The Wyrn's long association with many of the Damhàn allows the Wyrn to work as subtly on the Ananasi as they in turn manage to work on the human population in general. They do not realize just how crafty the Wyrn can be, or how easily they can fall to the Corrupter's influences. They are, after all, an arrogant people.

The Wyld

Following the Wyld is the job of every Kumoti. They must follow the philosophies of the Wyld's chaotic nature, but that doesn't mean they find the task easy. Most of the Ananasi are far too structured in their way of thinking to get comfortably behind the ideals of the Wyld without prodding and plenty of observation. For that reason, the Kumoti are the most likely of all the Damhàn to actually associate with other Ovid.

The rub here, is that most of the Changing Breeds just plain do not trust the Ananasi, and with good reason. The



Ananasi are first and foremost out for themselves and the ideals of their Mother-Queen. Even among the Ovid they befriend, there isn't any true feeling or depth of emotion. The Patient Ones are also the distant ones. They just aren't capable of joining with a pack the same way that others are. It isn't in their nature. They can mimic a good friendship with the best of them, but they will never truly belong in the same way.

The Ananasi don't suffer penalties for being by themselves; they aren't social creatures. They have no need of others, save when the urge to mate comes over them, and even then they only need to sate their physical desire.

Unlike the Hatar, the Kumoti don't suffer any profound effects for their service to the Wyld's ideas — it's just not powerful enough any more to have any noticeable effect. They remain detached and unemotional.

The Kumo

The Ananasi try to pretend that the Kumo are not a problem, just as people tend to think that the past isn't really all that important, and that events half a world away won't have an impact on them eventually. While the Damhàn might tend to believe the Kumo are insignificant in their lives, they are sadly mistaken. The Kumo know all too much about the Ananasi, and they aren't afraid to use that knowledge to the best of their ability.

The Kumo are not quite the same as the Ananasi, not physically and certainly not mentally. The Kumo are far more chaotic in nature, more attuned to emotions and more malicious in their actions. That isn't to say that the Damhàn are kinder, gentler creatures, merely more economical in their actions. The Kumo might decide to torture someone for the simple joy of torture; the Ananasi inevitably have an ulterior motive. One of the biggest differences between the two races physically is that Kumo can produce metis, while the by-product of any union between Ananasi is something a little different.

While there are physical and mental differences between the two groups, they are still closely related, and they are still doing what they believe is in the best interest of the race as a whole. Unfortunately, the Ananasi are largely convinced — wrongly — that the Kumo would never consider leaving Asia in order to accomplish that goal. The Kumo have long since moved away from their original homelands and infiltrated the Ananasi. They are sometimes caught and sometimes even destroyed, but they have no fear of the Damhàn. The Kumo serve their purpose too, and Ananasa doesn't share her reasons with anyone.

There is a long history of mistrust and violence between the Damhàn and the Kumo. The differences in their cultures and beliefs prevent any real change in that history. There is too much bad blood, too much bad history for them to ever reconcile.

The Kumo do serve Ananasa, but not in the same way that the Damhàn do. They serve to test and strengthen the

rest of the Ananasi. They are a necessary obstacle that most of the werespiders think of as a minor inconvenience.

The Kumo do not acknowledge Ananasa in the same way, but presumably the conflicts they create with the Damhàn serve her purposes, just as everything else she does serves her purposes. This is only one of many secrets that Ananasa has kept from her children.

Queen Ananasa

Queen Ananasa sits in her opal prison, and weaves her own plans. She does not respond to the ministrations of the Wyrms, neither do the threats of the Weaver nor the actions of the Wyld concern her overly much. They are currently only obstacles that stand in the way of her final goals. Ananasa is not a standard Totem, though at present she can do little more than what a Totem does for any of the Ovid.

The Wyrms are her captors, and Ananasi legend holds that he is likewise her lover — although this latter is highly unlikely, considering how much impossibly more *vast* the Wyrms are. Ananasi is an Incarna, and still “small” enough to have something approaching a fathomable personality — the Wyrms are Celestine, and big beyond any yardstick of human or shapeshifter sentiment.

The Weaver is a creature of meticulous ways, and is the perfect definition of anal retentive behavior. Nothing can ever be left to chance, and for that reason Weaver created Ananasa in the first place. Ananasa is not a servant of Weaver, despite her claims to be just that. She is a “back-up disk” of the Weaver. Her entire purpose for being is, according to some Corax, to take the place of Weaver in the cosmic scheme of things should anything ever go wrong. The problem is, she really hasn’t been activated yet, because Weaver won’t permit it.

In Ananasa’s belief, everything that went wrong with the Weaver in the past could be mended if she could simply fulfill the function for which she was created. She believes that her sole purpose for being is to rectify everything that is wrong with the Triat. Unfortunately, she remains imprisoned.

Should she ever manage to get free, she will do everything she can to destroy the Weaver and take her place. At the current time, she isn’t strong enough to manage that task. The Weaver is growing stronger all the time, and even at her best, Ananasa isn’t nearly tough enough to take the Weaver on.

Still, her patience, cunning and manipulative skills make those of the Ananasi seem like the casual whims of amateurs. She has trained them well, but has not taught her Children all of her secrets. Ananasa has many plans in motion, and only the smallest of them are known by her followers.

The simple fact of the matter is that Ananasa works on a very different time scale than anything mortal ever has. She is patient, and she has all the time in the universe to set matters right — or so she figures.

When they are first brought into the fold, every Ananasi meets with an avatar of Queen Ananasa. The avatar is only manifested in the Sacred Caves, where all Ananasi are taken to learn of their heritage. Three separate teachers — one Tenere,

one Kumoti and one Hatar — must join together to form the body of the Mother-Queen’s avatar. The reason for this is simple: there can be no doubt in the minds of the werespiders that Ananasa is real, and very much active in their lives. The sight of the avatar is terrible, and has driven most of the few non-Ananasi who saw her to the brink of insanity. It takes a very strong will to gaze upon the avatar without being affected in some way. The Damhàn are resistant to the detrimental effects, simply because Ananasa wants them to be. They are affected, just the same. They are convinced beyond any doubt of the power and wisdom of the Mother-Queen.

Ananasa is indeed the guiding force behind the Ananasi, but she is not as kind as she would like most to think. Betrayal of her goals is enough cause for her to send one of her chosen to hunt down and destroy the werespider foolish enough to disobey her. She has several secrets she keeps from her children, not the least of which is the final fate of the metis created when one werespider mates with another. These metis are called the Atahsaia, and she has plans for them as well.

The Atahsaia

The Atahsaia are metis, born of two werespiders mating. They are not the same as their parents, and could never easily be mistaken for them. The Atahsaia are killing machines, pure and simple. They cannot easily assume a human form, their appetites are voracious, and they know nothing of kindness or pity.

When the Atahsaia are born, they hatch from the gigantic egg sacs that a werespider impregnated by another of her kind must employ. Once they’ve hatched — usually devouring any and all of their siblings, so that only the strongest survives — powerful Spider-spirits or elder Ananasi promptly take them away from their parents and carry them to a hidden location in the Deep Umbra. There they are allowed to mature, and using powerful rituals known only to a few carefully selected Damhàn, they are frozen in Amber, preserved for when they are needed. Ananasa herself is virtually the only creature these nightmares will communicate with. To all others, they are hostile to a fault.

Though the Ananasi might speak of these creatures, they know remarkably little about them. They are not considered a part of the Damhàn, because for all practical purposes, they are different breed entirely. The few who speak of the Atahsaia believe that the Mother-Queen has a special purpose in allowing their creation. They believe that when the time has come for the Mother-Queen to make her final moves in the elaborate game she plays to usurp the Triat, the Atahsaia will be her chosen warriors against any and all minions of the greater powers in the universe. Only time will tell if they are right.

Ananasi Colonies

Ananasi do not normally work together, except when they are ordered to do so by Ananasa. There are exceptions, however, and they are becoming far more commonplace as times continue to change. The first colonies of Ananasi made themselves known in Mexico in the early 1800s, when

the Hatar in the area started actively teaming up to defeat their brethren and anyone else who got in their way. Just who came up with the idea remains a mystery that has never been solved, but most Damhàn accept that the notion came from the Mother-Queen. It's commonly accepted by the werespiders that Ananasa doesn't tell them everything.

These days almost all of the werespiders in Mexico and South America are joined together in colonies, though some are far tighter in organization than others. The war between the factions of Ananasi in Mexico make it almost impossible for most of the Ananasi to feel comfortable without a few others of their kind to watch their backs.

Colonies are, by and large, loosely tied together. For the most part they go about their own business until they decide the time has come to work towards a common goal. More often than not, that goal is the continued existence of their species in a city where the vampires and the Garou have started getting too numerous for the werespiders' collective comfort. Cities where the Sabbat vampires are prevalent, or where the Bone Gnawers and Glass Walkers are closer to "common" than usual are normally the most likely to have established colonies.

There are exceptions, of course. In certain areas it's perfectly natural for the spiders to colonize. There isn't a reason in the world why the Ananasi who come from such arachnid stock shouldn't feel inclined towards the same goal. In the Amazon there are several colonies of werespiders. Most of them remain deep in the rain forests, patiently waiting for the interlopers — Garou and Pentex alike — to come into their domains and try to start something the Damhàn are perfectly willing to finish. The war of the Amazon is a very real threat, but not to the degree that the Ananasi have felt obligated to choose sides. Some quietly work with Pentex, and others aid the Garou on the sly, preferring not to involve themselves too heavily with the werewolves and their insane politics.

Australia's remaining Ananasi population — most of whom are in Melbourne and the surrounding vicinities — have long since joined together for protection. Something out there is hunting them, and doing its very best to destroy them all. Safety in numbers is a given for them. They are possibly the tightest knit colonies on the planet.

The politics within a colony are often hard to fathom. There are no simply established leaders, and the pecking order can change from day to day. More often than not, the colonies choose their leaders for any given situation by deciding amongst themselves who is the most logical to head any given operation. Though, to be fair, rank does come into play in making that decision. Warriors lead in combat, and negotiators lead in business ventures. The werespiders are nothing if not calm about these matters. Once a decision is made, that individual is the leader, barring unusual circumstances.

Colonies are often short-lived gatherings, chosen by Ananasa for certain assignments. In the cases where the Mother-Queen has decided to gather a specific group together, all political and personal differences are set aside. The

Ananasi do not forget their conflicts, they merely set them on the back burner for the duration of the colony's existence.

These temporary colonies serve a specific purpose and aim for a particular goal, to the exclusion of almost everything else. But once the mission has been accomplished, the kid gloves come off and a conflict or two is almost inevitable. Just the same, there are set and established rules of engagement that all of the Ananasi follow regarding any challenges made at the dissolution of a colony. The biggest rule is simply that a battle must be fought using cunning and physical prowess — no weapons permitted. Beyond that, there are no rules.

Colonies picked by Ananasa may come from any and all factions of the Triumvirate. It is fairly common to see Hatar, Kumoti and Tenere working together towards whatever goal Queen Ananasa has chosen for them. The naturally cool and detached mentality of the werespiders lends itself to their cooperation in these cases, keeping them from resuming their more usual hostilities with one another.

The Microcosm

It's a simple fact: the world is much bigger when you're a spider than it is when you're a human. For Ananasi the choice to live as a human or a gathering of spiders is a little more challenging. Almost every Ananasi will experience "downtime" sooner or later. They might choose a human life or they might choose to exist in the woods not far from the suburbs. In the latter case, they are a part of the microcosm. It might not be the easiest thing for a Storyteller and player to handle, but the microcosm is an important factor in an Ananasi's life.

The differences in size and scale can't really be argued. But the threats facing a spider are also a lot different than those that face a human. Spiders don't worry about taxes, getting to the office on time or whether or not her aunt will like her birthday present. They deal with getting food, finding a safe place to put their web, and avoiding hungry birds, frogs and lizards. They deal with existence in the microcosm that becomes their world. Frankly, a chronicle set around that sort of setting could be very tasking: there aren't really any political situations beyond eating, mating and sleeping from time to time. But there *are* possibilities for a story or two.

Just how you want to handle a microcosm chronicle is in your hands, but if you choose to go that route, the stories could be anything from an infestation of humans into the area — humans with machines and construction equipment or humans with farming implements and tools, either way, from the microcosm's perspective, they are an infestation — to the changes brought about by a drought or a flood. Spiders don't necessarily like to have their world changed. It's inconvenient, especially if you've already set yourself up in a cushy place.

Weaver infestations need not take the form of human interference. Bees, ants, most insects that colonize, all have the sort of mentality that Weaver absolutely adores. They are unrelenting in their pursuit of what they want, from living space to food. Put enough ants into an area and there's going to be trouble, especially if the ants look at the spider as another source



of food. By adding actual direct influence from Weaver, a plan to alter the natural balance in the area, you can have a bit of fun with the local spider population. An anthill isn't a threat, but a hundred or a thousand of them is going to cause major changes. Locust swarms are also going to change things, especially if they decide to eat every bit of greenery in an entire area.

Where the Weaver makes a move, the Wyrms are almost certainly soon to follow. Imagine the troubles Wyrms-tainted colonies of ants could cause in an area — especially if they begin mutating, or gaining a sinister directive to wipe out all that remains of the Wyld in an area.

One challenge to a microcosm could simply come from an Ananasi following a different aspect moving into the region. The Damhans are rather territorial, and a civil war among the spiders could prove interesting, to say the least — especially because during "downtime" the werespiders might not be fully aware of what they are.

Memory Loss

Losing a leader Crawlerling is a dangerous proposition. If it should happen, it's in the hands of the Storyteller as to what exactly is destroyed. It could be childhood memories, or it could be very important skills. Think you're damned good with a handgun? You won't be if that portion of your brain goes missing and you have to learn it all over again. How about the ability to speak? Well, you'll probably keep that, but you might not understand every word spoken to you, even in your native tongue. Each leader Crawlerling lost removes a hefty chunk of all your memories, including simple motor functions and important events in your life. You might have to learn to walk all over again, or you might need to wear Depends until you can relearn how to control your bladder. You might not remember how to feed yourself, or how to cook. You might not have the vaguest idea of what a car is, or any recollection about the Garou and other enemies you've encountered. Just as importantly, they will still remember you. Lose a leader Crawlerling and you just might forget that you killed somebody recently and were noticed in the act. You could even forget that you're an Ananasi, and in the process, lose every Gift you've learned.

The Storyteller is encouraged to use the loss of a leader as an interesting tool in the telling of the chronicle, but Storytellers are also supposed to make certain you care for your leaders very well. If you lose one, you should likely come out of the experience with at least a few skills, Gifts and memories removed. Exactly what you lose in the process is entirely in the hands of the Storyteller (who is encouraged to be tough but fair in the matter).

The more leaders lost, the worse the recollection of simple skills and even the powers that Ananasi has gifted your character with. If you lose all of the leaders, you no longer have a viable character: You have a large collection of spiders, who will go their separate ways as quickly as they can.

Crawlerling Perspective

For most spiders the world of humans is just too vast to comprehend. Imagine being in the heart of Manhattan and

having the buildings around you move of their own volition, and you might be able to grasp what humans must surely look like to spiders.

Now imagine being a human and becoming a spider, or more accurately a thousand or so spiders. The human mind and the arachnid mind were never meant to see the world from a thousand separate perspectives at one time. For that reason, and to reflect the changes it causes in the ability to fully comprehend the world around you, the following system should work well enough for reflecting the sudden change in perspective.

If the player decides to move her character into Crawlerling form she should choose the number of leader Crawlerlings she'll be using. If the number is ten or less, there is no effect on her ability to react. If she chooses to break into more than ten leaders, there is a +1 difficulty on all Perception rolls and Willpower rolls. This is cumulative, so if she decides on 15 leaders, there is a +5 difficulty on all Perception and Willpower rolls as a result of the disorientation. Additionally, for every 2 leaders above 10, there is a +1 difficulty on all Wits rolls; this too is cumulative.

Building from the Ground Up

With all of the disadvantages of being in Crawlerling form, it's easy to ignore the biggest advantage of that shape. The Crawlerling is a defensive dream come true. It's damned hard to kill every spider in an Ananasi's body, and unless someone gets very lucky it's almost impossible to get all the leader Crawlerlings. "Oh, but you can use a bug bomb and get them all." Sure. And by the time you've pulled the bomb from its wrappings and set it up, the spiders are probably gone — all of the important ones, at any rate. The aforementioned flamethrowers are wonderful too, but even with a big blast of burning fuel, the odds are one or two will escape. A smart Damhan will take the leaders out of the way of combat and place them in any small place where they can fit. A crevice in the wall, or a corner under a sofa, or in a fold of an enemy's clothing, all are acceptable places to hide.

But even if the main body of a werespider is destroyed. As long as the leader Crawlerlings are still around, all is not lost. It's just a matter of building back up the body mass. Initially, spider-born Ananasi must devour their way through a large number of other spiders to build up the mass needed to become a true werespider. The process sometimes takes years, because there are other predators that have to be avoided, and because not all spiders are willing to become dinner for the fledgling Ananasi. But once that goal has been accomplished the first time around, the werespider can summon additional spiders to regenerate. The same is true of a werespider who's been reduced to one or two leader Crawlerlings. Using the right Gifts, or merely their hunting skills, they can build a new body in a matter of days or weeks. They know how to handle the process and they've likely had plenty of practice along the way. What are a few weeks in the grander scheme of things?

Ah, but there are other ways. The Ananasi doesn't need to hunt down hundreds of spiders to rebuild her body, at least

not when she can hunt down just one human. All Ananasi have a powerful sense of self-preservation, and most will do what they must to ensure their own survival. Unlike the other Ovid, they have an option that is radical and very effective. They can take over another person completely, by entering the body of that person and eating the person's entire mass.

How can one little spider eat an entire person? Not easily. It takes timing, cunning and a serious desire to survive at any cost. The best time to catch a new body is while the current owner of that body is sound asleep. The Crawlerling must start by boring into the body of the target, preferably into the brain, where the gray matter, which is already softer than most flesh, can easily be consumed. This can be done with several different Gifts that most Ananasi already possess, such as Burrow. Once inside the brain, they must eat quickly. As spiders do not eat solid foods, they must liquefy even the soft tissues of the brain and then drink them down. Each bit of liquid they consume in this fashion immediately becomes a part of the Ananasi's body mass. In a matter of an hour or so, an Ananasi can devour the entire brain of their victim.

At this point, the body should die, but that isn't the case. The Ananasi in the process of consuming a person in this fashion is helped along by the blessing of Ananasa. While consuming the brain, they extend a part of themselves out through the nerve clusters and take over the autonomic functions of the victim. This is effectively the same as becoming a leader and a drone Crawlerling all over again. The leader continues to eat, and the drone keeps the body going. Once the brain is gone and the drone has taken over the body functions, the leader begins feeding again, moving through the body and devouring flesh, assimilating that flesh and replacing it with more drones, until the entire body has been consumed. The entire process takes roughly four hours.

Once the body has been consumed the Ananasi has the body mass needed and can go on being an Ananasi, but with a few changes. First and foremost, the genetic makeup of the werespider has now been changed. Just as consuming different types of spiders can change the appearance of the werespider, so too the flesh of a human being. Where the Ananasi that infested and devoured a body might have been male, the new host could very well be female. Race, gender and human appearance will all be altered to match the new "host" of the Ananasi consciousness. This form of cannibalism has led to a rough sort of immortality for several of the Damhàn. It's possible to escape from hunters and enemies in this fashion or simply to start a new life with a new identity. The Ananasi do what they must, and few of them feel the least remorse for killing a human to have a new body, just as they feel no remorse for eating spiders to get bigger and stronger. It's a simple matter of survival.

Perhaps the most unsettling side effect of this experience for the Anansi is that they also gain the memories of their victims in this fashion. The memories are seldom as vivid as the "true" life experiences of the invading werespider, but they can access those memories to ascertain who they



have now become and who and what was important to that person. More than a few people have awakened after a night's sleep to discover that their mate seems like an *entirely different person*. Some of those people were absolutely right. The person they were with has been killed and replaced by an Ananasi. The only sign that anything might have been wrong the night before would have been some twitching and the sounds of uncomfortable sleep from their mate during the night.

And now on to those questions that remain:

Why doesn't the Ananasi split into a couple of Crawlerlings and get into two or more people?

Two reasons: Each would only have a fraction of the original's memories, and more importantly the fledgling "secondary" spirit dies. It would seem that Ananasa won't permit it; her children have tried and they've failed. Also, would you *really* want a second person out there with access to some of your most intimate thoughts and memories?

What if the victim wakes up during the process?

The victim first loses his or her brain, which means that long before the entire process has been finished, any attempt to eradicate the invading spider would be impossible. Also, as the brain feels no pain, the victim wouldn't know that something was wrong until it was too late.

How often can a werespider do this?

As often as the werespider wants to, but as it is inconvenient, they aren't likely to do it very often. Also, each time the Ananasi does this, it costs one permanent Gnosis point. That's costly after a while.

So, a werespider could really become immortal by switching bodies?

Absolutely, but only with the following limitations: One: Ananasa, the Mother-Queen, doesn't grant immortality to her Children. If she feels they are misusing this power or that they *do not* deserve to continue on in this fashion, she will stop the regeneration from working. Ananasa is very active in the lives of her Children, even if she remains imprisoned.

Two: Ananasa made the Ananasi with physical limitations, to ensure that they never believed themselves above her or the Triat. Unless the Damh  n attempting to invade another

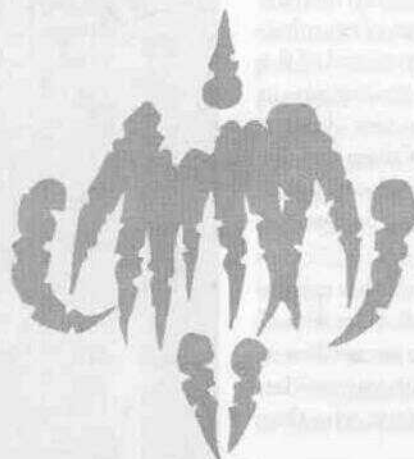
body in this fashion is already in danger of being destroyed, she only permits the change of identity for those who are currently very much in her favor. This form of immortality is a reward for loyal service, not merely a benefit of being a werespider.

Who decides when a werespider can do this?

Fate (and more importantly, the story's needs) has a big role in the decision. If the werespider has been reduced to a handful of Crawlerlings, the werespider can make the change simply by eating. If the Ananasi simply wants a new body and identity, it is entirely in the hands of the Storyteller as to whether or not Ananasa will permit the infestation/possession to take place.

What if an Ananasi uses this trick to take over the body of a werewolf/vampire/changeling/supernatural entity within the World of Darkness?

First off, if you're thinking of the potential unlimited power, you're wasting your time. It doesn't work that way. Yes, a werespider could, potentially, attack and consume an enemy in this fashion, but it wouldn't change the fact that the werespider is only a werespider. Devouring a Garou from the inside out means only that you've killed a werewolf and assumed his identity. While that is, potentially, a wonderful method of infiltration a sept, it does not give the character the sudden ability to change into any werewolf forms from Glabro to Lupus. It just means she happens to very strongly resemble someone who, once upon a time, was a werewolf. It's the spirit as much as the body that makes a werewolf a werewolf. It's the *spirit that holds the Rage*, and the *spirit* that allows the change in shapes. The spirit doesn't hang around when the body has been consumed. The same is true of mages, changelings and almost all other supernaturals — when the life force is gone, so are the powers. Finally, vampires just cannot be "commandeered" in this method. Trying might prove interesting, but Ananasi cannot run the autonomous functions of a vampire's body the same way they can those of a living being. *Once again, the spirit that animates the corpse doesn't hang around.* Eating the brain of a vampire basically makes the vampire die the Final Death, and in a matter of seconds a werespider trying this stunt will very suddenly find himself sitting in and supping on a rotting corpse or a pile of ashes.



Ananasi

ANANASI™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Breed:
Faction:
Aspect:

Nature:
Demeanor:
Concept:

Attributes

Physical

Strength ●○○○○
Dexterity ●○○○○
Stamina ●○○○○

Social

Charisma ●○○○○
Manipulation ●○○○○
Appearance ●○○○○

Mental

Perception ●○○○○
Intelligence ●○○○○
Wits ●○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Alertness ○○○○○
Athletics ○○○○○
Brawl ○○○○○
Dodge ○○○○○
Empathy ○○○○○
Expression ○○○○○
Intimidation ○○○○○
Primal-Urge ○○○○○
Streetwise ○○○○○
Subterfuge ○○○○○

Skills

Animal Ken ○○○○○
Drive ○○○○○
Etiquette ○○○○○
Firearms ○○○○○
Leadership ○○○○○
Melee ○○○○○
Performance ○○○○○
Repair ○○○○○
Stealth ○○○○○
Survival ○○○○○

Knowledges

Computer ○○○○○
Enigmas ○○○○○
Investigation ○○○○○
Law ○○○○○
Linguistics ○○○○○
Medicine ○○○○○
Occult ○○○○○
Politics ○○○○○
Rituals ○○○○○
Science ○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds

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Gifts

Gifts

Renown

Obedience (Weaver)
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Cunning (Wyrn)
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Wisdom (Wyld)
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Rank
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Blood Pool

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Gnosis

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Willpower

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□□□□□□□□□□

Health

Bruised □
Hurt -1 □
Injured -1 □
Wounded -2 □
Mauled -2 □
Crippled -5 □
Incapacitated □

Experience



ANANAS



Homid



No
Change

Difficulty: 6

Lilian

Strength (+3/+2*)
Dexterity (+3/+4*)
Stamina (+2)
Manipulation (-1)
Appearance (-1)

Difficulty: 6

INCITE DELIRIUM
IN HUMANS

Pithus

Strength (+4/+3*)
Dexterity (+2/+3*)
Stamina (+3)
Manipulation (-3)
Appearance (-2)

Difficulty: 6

INCITE DELIRIUM
IN HUMANS

Crawlerling

Strength: 0
Dexterity (+6)
Stamina: 0
Manipulation: 0
Appearance: 0

Difficulty: 6

Other Traits

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Fylfot

Item: ☐ Dedicated Level ____ Gnosis ____
Power ____

Item: ☐ Dedicated Level ____ Gnosis ____
Power ____

Item: ☐ Dedicated Level ____ Gnosis ____
Power ____

Item: ☐ Dedicated Level ____ Gnosis ____
Power ____

Rites

Combat

Maneuver/Weapon	Roll	Difficulty	Damage	Range	Rate	Clip

Brawling Chart			
Maneuver	Roll	Diff	Damage
Bite (Lilian)	Dex + Brawl	5	Strength + 1†
Bite (Pithus)	Dex + Brawl	5	Strength + 3†
Body Slam	Dex + Brawl	7	Special
Claw	Dex + Brawl	6	Strength + 2†
Grapple	Dex + Brawl	6	Strength
Kick	Dex + Brawl	7	Strength + 1
Punch	Dex + Brawl	6	Strength

† These maneuvers do aggravated damage.

Armor: _____

* Denotes optional male Attribute modifiers.

ANANAS

Merits & Flaws

Merit	Type	Cost	Flaw	Type	Bonus

Expanded Background

Allies

Kinfolk

Mentor

Contacts

Resources

Possessions

Gear (Carried)

Equipment (Owned)

Sylie

Location:

Description:

Experience

Total:

Gained From:

Total Spent:

Spent On:

Prelude

Age: _____

Hair:

Eyes:

Race:

Nationality:

Sex:

Height

Weight

Homid:

Lilian:

Pithus:

Battle Scars:

Colony Chart

Character Sketch