

CULT OF THE DOG

Predator's Curse

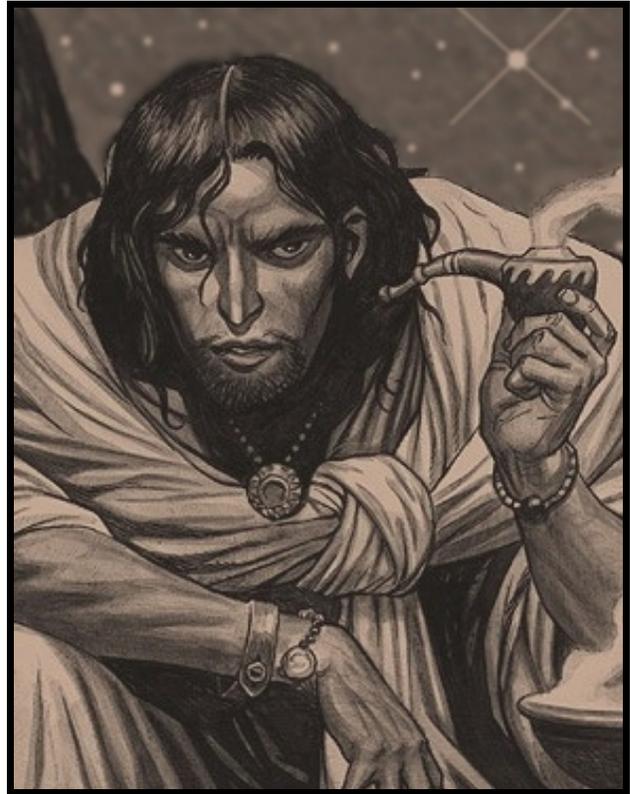
Long ago, there was once a man that loved his family. His name was Hassid. After he experienced his First Change defending his home from spirits, other Uratha came and explained to Hassid that his life among humans was over and he must live apart from his family now, for their safety. Out of the other werewolves' earshot, Hassid whispered to his wife that he would return in one year, and departed with his new family of wolves. His heart harbored sadness at leaving his family, but the brave werewolf did not let it show.

Hassid had an intuitive understanding of his spiritual nature, and at First Change his Primal Urge was already stronger than that of some experienced Uratha. Hassid advanced quickly as an Elodoth, and his spiritual potency increased as well. He never forgot his promise to his wife, however, and returned to his family in a year.

Hassid did not receive the joyous reunion he had expected. His wife and children had changed in his absence – they were dutiful and obedient, but distant, and sometimes Hassid could see fear in their eyes when they looked at him. He realized that it was not they that had changed, but he. He was no longer Hassid the husband and father, but a monster with obligations and ties to his own kind and spirits. Even when he remained in the man-shape, Hassid radiated primal power that drove his family and others away. Hassid knew that he could never live among them again as he once did.

But so great was the love in his heart that Hassid vowed to find a way to do just that, even if it meant forsaking his Uratha nature. The Half-Moon left his village again, but did not return to the People. Instead he entreated with spirits, hoping to find one that would return his humanity to him. But soon he realized no spirit could return that which was never taken, for Hassid was never a man, but always a Uratha that only dreamed he was a man. But he persevered, and after many months Hassid found Sirius, a guardian of men that lived among the stars. The spirit was old and powerful, and Hassid knew he could not force him into submission. He offered Sirius the only thing he had to give – his own servitude – in exchange for the secret of living among mankind again. Impressed with the werewolf's candor and Honor, Sirius agreed to accept Hassid and impart some of his nature to him. However, in exchange, Hassid would have to choose service to man and Sirius over obedience to the Tribes of the Moon, and to seek out other Uratha who would return to the fold of humanity.

One year after he left, Hassid returned to his family. He had left his predator's curse behind him; though still a creature of spirit, man and beast, Hassid lived harmoniously among mankind and protected them faithfully. He gave up much of his status among the People, but it was a small price to pay to have his family back. He fulfilled his promise to Sirius by defending his village from predators of all sorts, as well as sharing with other Uratha the peace and redemption Sirius offered. But no matter how many times he left, Hassid always returned to his beloved family. They could never understand the sacrifices he had made for them, but they loved him and were happy to have him back.



Not many werewolves are well-adjusted before their First Changes, but some manage to form stable relationships before it all goes wrong. Family and friends are very important to most people, and few Uratha cope easily with the alienation that comes with their new lives. Those who have supportive Wolf-Blooded families are lucky, but even they sense and fear the primal power they radiate. But human lovers, spouses, children and friends are fully affected by this predator's scent, and emotional distance and subconscious fear are inevitable in an Uratha's presence.

While the Uratha's predatory aura doesn't cause the dramatic dissolution of all her relationships and emotional ties (usually, anyway), it does steadily erode them, increasingly isolating her from those who she cares about. Even the rejection of strangers is painful to many werewolves; no longer can someone used to the casual acceptance of people stride among them with ease. And to advance as an Uratha one must develop her Primal Urge, which only exacerbates her alienation from humanity. To be a werewolf is to be rejected by society, forcing her to find solace only among her own kind.

However, some Uratha respond to this inevitability with a resounding “no”, insisting there must be another way. And the Cult of the Dog shows them that way... though mankind's acceptance comes at a price.

Doctrine and Beliefs

The philosophy of the Cult of the Dog is pretty straightforward. The Tribes of the Moon are responsible for protecting humans from rogue spirits, Hosts, the Pure and other dangers. To do that effectively, they must be able to move among humans as one of them. However, werewolves have obvious problems doing this, and their alienation only becomes more pronounced as their spiritual strength increases. It's easy to see how their very natures prevent Uratha from fulfilling their duties. Therefore, the proper course of action for Uratha is to eliminate impediments to their purpose – case in point, that which keeps them from interacting with people.

History of the Lodge

Many consider the Cult of the Dog a modern phenomena, but it's actually one of the oldest lodges in existence. Humanity's rejection of werewolves was often a bigger issue for the Uratha of yore than their modern brethren, due to the great importance placed on family and community in those times. The People likely sought ways around this problem for as long as they've been around. As for when exactly Sirius' "solution" was discovered, not even the Cult's most educated historians know for sure. The Cult of the Dog's roots can be traced back to the ancient Middle East; it verifiably predates Ancient Egypt. Few stories of the People mention the Cult, as has always been a small lodge that existed on the very fringes of werewolf society.

The Cult of the Dog has waxed and waned over the millennia, and tends to prosper when and where humanity does. It's growing in modern times like never before, however. Dog Cultists can hide within the wool and weave of mankind like no other werewolves can, wearing flawless facades of men and common dogs. It's still a small lodge, but growing and spreading geographically.

Indoctrination

One reason the Cult of the Dog's membership is on the rise is lodge members have become active proselytizers. They don't put out fliers or hold tent revivals, of course. But they watch other werewolves closely, especially Ghost Wolves and those without packs, and look for signs that their social lives are deteriorating. They typically target the young and freshly Changed, for these are the Uratha who most keenly feel the sting of slowly losing friends and family, and are least likely to have acclimated to their new existences. (When faced with a prospective convert, some Cultists secretly "nudge" things a little, subtly aggravating existing problems with humans to make the Uratha more receptive. However, this isn't a very common practice.) Once a werewolf hits a low point, a recruiter shows up and offers whatever assistance he can, and quietly takes a closer measure of her. If she has true potential, the Dog Cultist offers her a solution to her problems with humanity. (This is surprisingly effective, and cults of all types have used variations on this tactic to swell their ranks.)

Once initiated into the lodge, lone wolves are folded into Cult of the Dog packs and further indoctrinated into the lodge's beliefs and practices. Those already members of existing packs are encouraged to spend what time they can spare with fellow lodge members, but the Cult doesn't attempt to pull them from their packs or Uratha society at large... because that soon happens on its own. The new Cultist quickly realizes problems when she interacts with other Uratha. Some snub her, while others greet her with derision and insults. She's challenged more frequently, often for petty reasons. Other werewolves avoid eye contact or initiate it too often, shy from the Cultist's presence or ignore her. Even her packmates treat her differently.

The sum effect of this prejudice drives Dog Cultists from mainstream Uratha society and further into their lodge's subculture. Most end up leaving their packs and relocating to territories held by the Cult; some reject the tribes they feel have rejected them and become Ghost Wolves. And so the lodge grows at the expense of Uratha society at large.

What Gives?

There is a good reason for this subtle rejection of Dog Cultists. Uratha sense something "off" about lodge members, as if something were missing from or wrong with them. This often isn't a conscious judgment, but a reaction inspired by instincts as primal as the fear that drives men from the company of werewolves. So while humans no longer sense the predatory nature of Dog Cultists, Uratha distinctly sense its absence. That Cultists often look like dogs in their alternate forms further tips werewolves off that something might be wrong.

So an Uratha that joins the lodge doesn't actually lose her social stigma – it just transfers from humans to the People.

Practices

The Cult of the Dog earns its "cult" label. It's a closed society, yet actively recruits. It has its own doctrines and holds religious services. Its members support each other. But beyond this, members of the lodge act much like other werewolves. They stake out territories, operate in packs, adopt totems, and defend their holdings from threats. They pay a great deal of attention to the welfare of humans in their territories, but then, so do a lot of Uratha. On the whole, Dog Cultists aren't really that different from their brethren. But there several important areas where the lodge does deviate from the practices of Uratha at large.

Humanity: First, Dog Cultists interact more with humans than other Uratha do. Most live with their families, hold down jobs, host cookouts, attend parent-teacher conferences and otherwise form and maintain close ties to people. They don't experience the subtle rejection from human society that other werewolves do. This makes members of the lodge ideal guardians for their communities, and they're often more content with their lives than many Uratha. But by identifying with people so strongly, they lose their identities as werewolves. The scent of the predator is in truth a benefit to Uratha because it forces them to interact with their own kind, and leaves little room to deny what they really are: supernatural predators with spiritual and social obligations to the People. Running back to one's family and familiar routines may be comforting for Dog Cultists, but it's also a form of escapism that's potentially dangerous to everything they care about – especially since enemies will gladly exploit the Cultist's loved ones and other ties to humanity.

Lodge Identity: Forsaken as a whole are highly balkanized and maintain no semblance of unity, and are as likely to fight each other as talk. But they do have a shared culture, from which they derive customs, beliefs, lore and self-understanding. Forsaken from Ohio, Japan and Mozambique would be all able to communicate though the First Tongue, trade spirit and tribal lore, and would otherwise find they have a great deal in common. Because of the "reverse predator's taint" from which Dog Cultists suffer, however, they maintain little contact with other Uratha. They find greatest acceptance within their lodge, and so they gradually build their identities, practices and beliefs around it. Many Dog Cultists tend to think of themselves as lodge members first and werewolves second, even favoring a canine form when they shift to Urhan. This has led

to a somewhat ingrown subsociety that is definitely still Uratha, but that lacks the diversity and dynamism of the greater culture from which it hails. One advantage to this interdependence offers, however, is a degree of camaraderie unusual among Forsaken, and Dog Cultists often cooperate... or at least don't fight each other as much. Cult packs often come their fellows' aid against serious opposition – as other werewolf packs, Hosts and other foes have discovered.

Patron Relationship: The Cult of the Dog maintains an unusually tight relationship with its patron spirit. The reverence in which the lodge holds Sirius is almost religious. Many packs maintain monthly or even weekly services, though others are more lax; still, all Dog Cultists observe some ceremony. Sirius veneration is performed under the night sky, when Sirius' star is visible. This veneration isn't very formal, Sirius merely asks his packs to run and howl for him while wearing the visage of dogs.

Countenance: Dog Cultists use the Anybeast Gift to assume the forms of canines, and rarely appear in their “natural” wolflike forms. They do this out of respect to Sirius, and because dogs have the advantage of passing among people far more easily than wolves. Each cultist settles on a large dog form that suits her, and that can pass among mankind with little scrutiny. Mastiffs, German Shepherds, pit bulls, Dobermans and Labradors are popular choices, while some Cultists go for the “mutt” look. Lodge Uratha become so used to their altered shapes they shift to them by default, and soon don't have to use Anybeast consciously. Cultists' Dalu, Gauru and Urshul forms also take on the appearance of their “dog forms”, leading to unique visages and confusion over the existence of “weredogs”. This rejection of the wolf is enough to earn the Cult of the Dog the enmity (or at least bewildered disapproval) of many werewolves.

Spirit Relations

On the whole, spirits see Dog Cultists as no different from other Uratha: they're insufferable meddlers and half-mortal bastards that claim a mandate that's not theirs. Spirits that respect *Urfarah's* memory, as well as wolf-spirits, dislike members of Sirius' lodge for denying their heritage. However, dog-spirits are somewhat more predisposed to Cult of the Dog members, especially if these Uratha proudly wear canine forms and entreat with them respectfully, so a large number of lodge packs have formed totem pacts with dog-spirits.

PATRON SPIRIT

The name and nature of Sirius is known to humanity, who have named a star for him, positioned in the southern heavens from an earthly perspective. He's seen as a protector, guardian and hunter that defends the world from unknown dangers. He retains this role and reputation among Uratha, and it would seem Sirius has a lot in common with *Urfarah*, perhaps a descendant of the great wolf-spirit that fulfilled that very role in Pangaea. However, Sirius' descent can't be traced back to Father Wolf's lineage, even through his distant (and widely disregarded) canine descendants. No one knows where Sirius comes from; he simply showed up in the outer reaches of the *Hisil* several millennia ago.

Sirius manifests alternately as a great black hound with radiant white eyes, and as a dog-shaped patch of darkness spotted with stars (much like an ambulatory swatch from the night sky). Sirius appears in Uratha followers' visions and dreams, but never manifests directly. Sirius' manifestations are accompanied by cold and disorientation, as if the void between the stars accompanies

him. Sirius teaches Gifts and offers council through spiritual intermediaries known as Star Hounds (see pg. XX); this use of spiritual proxies is unusual among spirits.

Two Theories

“I think Sirius is one of Red Wolf's sons, one that exemplifies took adaptation and living among men. Why doesn't *Sagrim-Ur* claim him, you ask? Well, have you asked him lately? Because really, all we're basing that assumption on is the word of other Forsaken, and they're not very objective when it comes to us. Spirits are strange and their motives are their own; it's arrogant to think we can know the mindset of gods, and that includes Sirius. But I do know this, from all that I've seen: Sirius has great respect for humanity, more so than many other spirits, and he empowers us to protect them. He asks us to take the forms of dogs, a practice that other Uratha criticize, but it's pretty clear to me this is just common sense – we can easily pass among mankind in our Urhan forms. Any Uratha that runs around as a wolf in front of people is a fool, and risks exposing the People. In whatever way Sirius is related to *Urfarah* and his brood, I believe our patron represents the best qualities of Father Wolf. That is why I follow him.”

– *Maria Valeze, Ghost Wolf Elodoth, Dog Cultist*

“You wanna know why we can't figure out where Sirius fits into Father Wolf's family or the spirit community? Because it doesn't. Not many spirits will talk about it – they seem scared to – but the few that will told me that Sirius isn't a true spirit, but some sort of interloper that's taken the form of a dog because that shape suits it. I'm not sure the term 'idigam' really applies to Sirius, because it's not like the terrible things the packs of Colorado faced... but it is alien, something that came from *out there*, from beyond the stars and the Shadow. It doesn't belong here. Sure, the worst Sirius has done so far is poach some gullible Uratha and fulfill their delusions of 'normal' human lives and make them pretend to be dogs. Whatever floats their boats. But while its dupes might not be a big problem, I think Sirius is. No one knows what its agenda is, why it came here, or what it's capable of.

“I don't know about you, but that's enough to scare me.”

– *Micheal “Owl's Eyes” Carter, Bone Shadow Cahalith*

JOINING THE LODGE

The Cult of the Dog is a multi-tribal lodge; any Forsaken werewolf that has the requirements and the desire can join. However, the majority of Dog Cultists are Ghost Wolves, either never having joined a tribe or having left their tribes after joining the lodge. Ghost Wolves have the most tenuous link to Uratha culture, already living on its outskirts and often having no clear place in the world. The Cult of the Dog offers several important things to these lone wolves: a larger Uratha community that accepts them, a pack, and the acceptance of human beings. Not all Ghost Wolves find the Cult's recruitment pitch attractive, but many do, and end up finding purpose and redemption in the lodge. Other Cult werewolves get fed up with getting less respect than they feel they deserve, and they leave their tribes behind when they divorce themselves from Uratha society at large. However, about a quarter of Dog Cultists maintain tribal memberships; of these, Iron Masters are by far the most numerous, with a smattering of others. Very few Storm Lords find the lodge appealing.

The Cult of the Dog only accepts Uratha of moral fortitude and that want to protect and dwell among humanity. Those

that have ever killed humans find it very hard to be accepted into the lodge, though exceptions are made for kills made in self-defense or that were absolutely necessary. The Cult doesn't make any secret of its existence and isn't elitist, so those that earnestly seek out the lodge are welcomed if they meet their standards. However, most initiates are alienated Uratha that Dog Cultists targeted for recruitment (as described under Indoctrination).

Once a prospective member approaches (or is approached by) the Cult of the Dog, she's taught their basic beliefs. If she lacks the required Harmony but is otherwise a strong candidate for the lodge, Dog Cultists encourage the Uratha to regain her moral footing and leave the door open for her to petition again. Sirius' Star Hounds will teach the petitioner the Anybeast Gift if she doesn't know it; this is the only Mother Luna Gift these spirits teach. The Cult of the Dog wants new members, and will do whatever they can to facilitate that.

Inducting a werewolf into the Cult of the Dog is a solemn ceremony, and is always performed on a night when Sirius' star is in the night sky. A circle of Cultists lead a service to Sirius with the initiate in the center. The petitioner must be in a canine form for Sirius to accept her. At the ritual's apex, a Star Hound arrives and appears to merge with the new lodge member, disappearing as it enters her body; while this causes intense pain and chills for a few moments, no actual possession takes place, and no trace of the spirit remains in the Uratha's body. And then it's done – the Uratha is a member of the Cult of the Dog.

However, there's a catch, and one that werewolves won't know about until they've already been initiated. While the Uratha in question may not intend this, to subject oneself to this ceremony is to reject one's wolf nature, at least in part – after all, the werewolf accepts a doglike form and existence. This is a Harmony 5 sin, and the player must roll three dice to avoid losing a dot of Harmony. (If this drops a character below 5 Harmony she's still inducted into the cult, but would do well to restore her moral strength if she wishes to retain Sirius' favor.)

Sirius doesn't merely grant his supplicant boons, he transforms her spiritual nature subtly but permanently. This means if the character leaves the lodge at some point, she retains the benefits and weakness described below. So you can cut ties with the lodge if you want... but you can never really leave.

Clearly, joining the lodge isn't anything to do lightly.

Prerequisites: Empathy ●, Harmony 5, Mother Luna's Gifts ●●

Benefits: A Dog Cult Uratha gains several significant advantages. Foremost, she no longer radiates the predator's curse: her Primal Urge doesn't affect her Social dice pools with humans, allowing her to interact with humans as if she were one of them. The werewolf may use Anybeast at no Essence cost, as long as she uses that Gift to assume the form of a dog; this honors Sirius, and most Uratha do this out of reflex, adopting a “signature” dog form that fits them. Finally, Guardian Gifts become an affinity Gift List.

Special: Werewolves are instinctively less inclined to respect a member of the Cult of the Dog, as they can sense her debased wolf-nature; even subconsciously, the lodge member is perceived as weak and somehow *wrong*. (This is no indication of the Cultist's actual strength, she's simply seen as flawed.) Storytellers who want to represent this mechanically can impose a -1 penalty to the Dog Cultist's character's Social die rolls when she interacts with Uratha outside her lodge.

Perhaps a side effect of removing the predatory edge from the werewolf's aura, a Dog Cultist's Lunacy no longer inspires the sheer terror it once did. However, a human seeing the character in Urshal, Gauru or Dalu form is still strongly compelled to flee, and can't remember the event clearly. This weakens the Lunacy effect overall (add a +2 bonus to witnesses' Willpower verses all forms).

Dog Cultists feel this is more merciful than inflicting fear and possible psychological trauma on humans, but remain ardent about concealing their natures from them.

GUARDIAN GIFTS

Sirius is a protector, and grants his supplicants Guardian Gifts to enhance their connection to their friends, family, packs and communities. These unique powers grant Cult a crucial edge in defending and maintaining their territories; rival packs, Hosts and other enemies find it difficult to even scout areas held by experienced lodge members, much less invade them. Sirius' Star Hounds never teach these Gifts to werewolves outside the lodge.



Canine Rapport (●)

Once this Gift is learned, the Uratha gains the ability to empathically communicate with dogs in any form. Further, she can use dogs to transmit messages to other Dog Cultists through a “barking chain”: the werewolf speaks with a dog, which is then compelled through the power of this Gift to bark. This mystically passes the simple message to all canines in earshot, who in turn will bark out the code to other dogs. Any members of the Cult of the Dog who hears this instantly understands the message. (Meanwhile, the dogs don't necessarily understand what they're all barking about; they're simply the medium for the message.) In this fashion, distant lodge members can keep each other apprised and coordinate their activities. This ability is a little less useful since the advent of cell phones and text messaging, but it still sees frequent use.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Charisma + Animal Ken + Cunning

Action: Reflexive

ROLL RESULTS

Dramatic Failure: The dog becomes terrified and flees.

Failure: No effect; no communication is achieved.

Success: Canine Rapport grants two abilities. First, the werewolf gains the benefits of Wolf-Blood's Lure (Father Wolf ●), but only toward domesticated dogs; feral dogs and strays count as such for this purpose. Sending communications uses the same dice pool, but successes rolled determine the clarity of the message; typically, two words can be transmitted per success. So with one suc-

ess, a Uratha can send, “Park, now”; three would allow “Come to park, body, Azlu victim?”.

Exceptional Success: The user of Canine Rapport can send a brief visual “snapshot” with the message.

Ward (●●)

With a touch, the werewolf using this Gift invests a little of herself in an individual she wants to protect. Henceforth, she will be alerted whenever her ward is terrified or feels he's in mortal danger; no details are given, just the subject's identity and his emotional state. The subject of Ward must genuinely believe he's in imminent danger: walking through a bad neighborhood where the ward fears attack wouldn't alert his protector, but someone pulling a knife on him would. The Dog Cultist has a general sense of her imperiled ward's location, and can home in on him even if he moves (or is moved). Vigilance is typically only used on family members and others whom the Uratha cares deeply about.

The werewolf can remove the effects of this Gift at any time, but must touch the individual with whom she wants to sever the link.

Cost: 1 Essence per individual “marked”

Dice Pool: Wits + Empathy + Purity

Action: Instant

ROLL RESULTS

Dramatic Failure: The werewolf must wait one month before attempting to use this Gift on the subject again.

Failure: No effect.

Success: The subject is marked as described above. The sensing range of Ward is a radius one mile from the Uratha for each success the player rolled when marking the subject. The werewolf can mark as many individuals as she has Harmony dots with this Gift; if Harmony drops below the number of wards she has, one link is randomly severed.

Exceptional Success: The werewolf gains minor details about the nature of the danger.

Pack Bond (●●●)

The Uratha with this Gift is intuitively connected with her packmates, and instantly knows if they're in danger. The power of this gift allows her to locate her brethren and home in on them. If packmates in different locations are in danger, the Uratha may feel pulled in several directions at once.

Cost: 1 Essence for every member of the pack; this is a one-time expenditure unless severed (see below)

Dice Pool: Wits + Empathy + Honor

Action: Instant

ROLL RESULTS

Dramatic Failure: The werewolf must wait one month before attempting to use this Gift on her pack.

Failure: No effect.

Success: This Gift extends the effects of Ward to a werewolf's entire pack, and the benefits and restrictions of that Gift apply to Pack Bond. If the character's Harmony drops below the number of packmates she has, her empathic link to her entire pack is severed, and she must increase her Harmony before again establishing the bond. (Thus, it's wise for a Dog Cultist to maintain her Harmony!)

Exceptional Success: The werewolf gains minor details about the nature of the danger.

Attunement (●●●●)

The werewolf gains a preternatural understanding of her territory through this Gift, and knows it as well as her own house. She gains a deeper connection with its people, and knows who to

talk to about whatever matter is at hand. The Forsaken can navigate the area blindfolded, if necessary, and can never become lost or misdirected. Further, the effects of other Guardian Gifts are enhanced within her turf.

To use this Gift, the Uratha must first spend a few hours walking through her territory and among its people, during which she opens herself to her community's sights, sounds and ambiance; the player makes the required expenditures and die rolls. Thereafter, the lodge member is attuned to her territory. Larger areas require more Essence to attune than smaller ones; 2 Essence is enough to claim two square miles, with each point of Essence spent beyond that doubling the area: 3 Essence = four square miles, 4 Essence = eight square miles, etc. (Of course, Storytellers are free to dispense with the extra math and simply assign an Essence cost to a particular patch of land or location.) If the Uratha must move away from the area for any reason (something any werewolf does with great reluctance), she can sever her Attunement to it at will.

After the territory is attuned, the following benefits are automatic as long as the character remains there. The werewolf never gets lost and always knows the direction she's facing. She intuitively knows the quickest way from one point to another, as well as the locations of dead ends and environmental hazards (as per Know the Path). Her land and its people provide for her, and basic Streetwise and Survival die pools gain a +2 bonus (though this isn't added to Gift die pools). No place within her territory is hidden from her knowledge, though this Gift doesn't tell her what might be there – so while the Cultist might be aware of a hidden building through Attunement, she has no idea if it's abandoned, occupied by anti-government survivalists, infested by Rat Hosts or whatever unless she checks it out. Finally, the range of Ward and Pack Bond are extended: as long as both she and the recipients of those Gifts are within the attuned territory, the Uratha is aware when they're in danger.

Cost: 2 or more Essence, depending on size of territory

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Streetwise (for urban areas) or Survival (for rural areas) + Wisdom

Action: Automatic

ROLL RESULTS

Dramatic Failure: The werewolf must wait one month before attempting to again use Attunement on her territory. Further, for one month she suffers a -1 penalty to all Survival and Streetwise rolls while there.

Failure: The Uratha fails to attune herself to her territory.

Success: The Dog Cultist gains the above benefits.

Exceptional Success: The character claims 50% more territory than normal.

Vigil (●●●●●)

The Uratha's protective instincts are so developed that she can sense any harm to humans or Uratha that happens within territory upon which she's used Attunement, whether that injury inflicted by a Ridden or a mugger. Whenever such an event occurs, the Storyteller secretly rolls the die pool for this Gift and informs the player if the roll succeeds. Once she detects the violent act, she can home in on the location where it occurred; assailants rarely stick around and wait to be apprehended, and if the Dog Cultist wants to find him she'll have to rely other means than this Gift. Vigil isn't as refined as other Guardian Gifts: it only detects intentional violence – assaults, murder and the like – and the Dog Cultist won't detect danger or incidental death. (Which is probably a good thing for her; she has to rest sometime, after all.)

Vigil is a very powerful Gift, and will drive even the most vigilant guardians to continual distraction unless the pack maintains its territory very well. Therefore, Sirius only teaches Vigil to those packs that have successfully protected their communities and live

up to the highest standards. Areas claimed by such elite packs are model communities, and Vigil helps them keep them that way.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Wits + Streetwise (for urban areas) or Survival (for rural areas) + Honor

Action: Instant

ROLL RESULTS

Dramatic Failure: The Cultist not only fails to sense the event, but all further rolls for Vigil are at -2 for one week.

Failure: The violent event goes unnoticed.

Success: The character gains the above information.

Exceptional Success: The werewolf can intuitively track the assailant.

CULT OF THE DOG RITES

Star Reading (••)

Sirius is a spirit of astrological significance, and werewolves that follow him can glean wisdom and insight from studying the Dog Star and surrounding celestial bodies. Star Reading offers Uratha lore on the territories they claim, and advice on matters that relate to their communities; readings offer little on matters outside those spheres. The stars may reveal a future incursion by a rival pack or the changing fortunes of a territory's human residents, but would offer nothing on spirit choir politics or the upcoming Sun-Lakers game. Any information gained is general, and the rite works best when the ritualist simply opens herself to what the sky tells her instead of trying to research a specific matter.

Cult of the Dog astrologers create elaborate charts that plot the movements of Sirius' star, Luna and the planets through the sky, but simple mediation and diligent study are often sufficient.

Performing the Rite: This rite can only be performed on nights the Dog Star is visible in the southern heavens. The ritual is a quiet one, and requires introspection and focus. The ritualists join hands and clear their minds while watching the night sky. Portents are slowly revealed to the lead ritualist, who must then interpret and relay them.

Dice Pool: Harmony

Action: Extended, 10 successes required; each roll represents ten minutes of game time.

ROLL RESULTS

Dramatic Failure: The character misinterprets the signs badly.

Failure: The stars reveal nothing tonight.

Success: A successful roll imparts a limited version of the Cahalith auspice ability that grants information on the sort of things discussed above. The lore gained takes the form of arcane knowledge, not dream visions, but are vague and require interpretation.

Exceptional Success: Somewhat more detailed information is gained.

SUGGESTED MODIFIERS

Lead ritualist is a Cahalith:	+1
Lead ritualist has studied star charts:	+1
Light cloud cover, but star is visible	-1
Ritualist researches a specific matter:	-1
Successive attempts in a month:	-2, cumulative

Cult of the Dog Story Hooks

• **Family Troubles:** A player character's relationships with friends and family have reached a low point, and he stands to lose every person that he cares about. At least some of this is due to his predatory aura, as his loved ones don't trust him and can't relate to him. A Cult of the Dog werewolf approaches him and offers him the opportunity to regain what he lost. Is the character desperate enough to join the lodge? If he's initiated and his spiritual is "scent" eliminated, is that enough to earn back his loved ones? And what if he later finds that the lodge may have manipulated events to encourage him to join?

• **Desperation:** On the flip side of "Family Troubles", a werewolf's husband has just left her, taking her children with him; as she progressed spiritually, they became further estranged from her until things reached a breaking point. To the dismay of her pack, she's now seeking the Cult of the Dog in the hope joining them will help her get her family back. She passes through the players' pack's territory during her search, and pursued by members of her pack trying to talk sense into her. Both the upset Uratha and her pack try to enlist the locals' help. Is the woman desperate and ripe pickings for opportunistic Dog Cultists, or is she making a stone sober decision to save something important to her? Should the player characters get involved at all? And who's minding the feuding pack's territory during this drama?

• **Concerns:** A renowned Bone Shadow trusted by the players' pack approaches them. He informs them that a Cult of the Dog pack has claimed territory adjacent to theirs, and relates his concerns that the lodge is a cover for something sinister. He believes that Sirius and his lodge intend to "steal" as many Uratha as it can, strip away their heritage and consolidate power in the region. The Bone Shadow wants the pack to investigate their new neighbors and report anything suspicious to him. If the pack does check up on the Dog Cultist pack, however, it doesn't seem to be up to anything nefarious. They maintain their *Histil*, protect their people, and mind their own business – qualities every Uratha pack wants in their neighbors. Is the Hirfathra Hissu just paranoid? Or should the characters look deeper into the Cultists' affairs and risk antagonizing them?

ADDENDUM

Maria Valeze

Auspice: Elodith

Tribe: Ghost Wolf

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2 (3/5/4/2), Dexterity 2 (2/3/4/4), Stamina 2 (3/4/4/3)

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3 (2/3/0/3), Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computer 2, Occult 2, Politics (Social Dynamics) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Drive 2, Firearms 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Empathy (Psych Analysis) 4, Persuasion (Comforting) 3, Socialize 1, Streetwise 2

Merits: Allies (Social Workers) 2, Languages (Spanish, English, First Tongue), Resources 1, Totem 2

Primal Urge: 3

Willpower: 7
Harmony: 7
Essence Max/Per Turn: 12/1
Virtue: Charity
Vice: Sloth
Health: 7 (9/11/10/7)
Initiative: 5 (5/6/7/7)
Defense: 2 (2/2/2/2)
Speed: 9 (10/13/16/14)
Renown: Honor 2, Wisdom 2

Gifts: (1) Canine Rapport, Sense Malice, Scent Beneath the Surface, (2) Anybeast, Scent of Taint, Ward

Rituals: 3; rites: (1) Rite of Dedication, Rite of the Spirit Brand, Shared Scent, (2) Banish Spirit, Call Human



Maria Valeze had always been a good listener. She had a knack for seeing situations from different angles, and offered others sound advice when it was asked for. She enjoyed helping people, and was a natural for social work. Maria channeled her hidden aggression into her studies, and passed with flying colors. Fresh out of college and ready to change the world, Maria returned to the barrio in which she grew up, seeing she was needed there.

And unlike many social workers, Maria didn't burn out. She was only able to chip away at the social problems that plagued people, but she made a difference where she could. Her enthusiasm was infectious, and she was popular among her coworkers and the clients she ministered to.

But then Maria's First Change was triggered by a mugging that went far worse for her attacker than her. Being a shape-shifting spirit-warrior wasn't a responsibility she wanted or needed; weekly Mass was as mystical as Maria wanted to get. She was initiated into Forsaken society, but chose no tribe and went back to her old life as soon as she was able. She only kept minimal contact with other Uratha, wanting to focus on social work. But the people that once liked her company began shying from her, while her clients weren't as open with her as they once were. Even her family kept their distance. Despite her efforts to hide it, people still sensed the wolf coiled within her. With her senses now fully open, Maria wasn't able to ignore the spiritual reality around her, nor deny the instincts urging her to run with a pack. Unable to do what made her happy and torn apart internally, the woman was miserable and close to snapping.

But then the Cult of the Dog found Maria Valeze. Despite the enthusiastic speeches given by the Cultist that introduced her to the lodge, she joined half-heartedly, having neither much hope or much to lose. But the lodge gave Maria a new lease on life. Her problems with coworkers and clients dissolved, making it possible to continue her life's work. And though she never wanted much to do with Uratha before, she's come to enjoy working with her all-Dog Cultist pack. Maria has found that fixing problems in her barrio's spiritual reflection often helps matters on this side of the Gauntlet, and the young werewolf and her pack have made progress in making their corner of the world a little better.

Maria has a sweet face and pretty eyes, but hides behind plastic rims and frumpy clothes. She's a little on the heavy side, but

her Uratha metabolism and an active lifestyle have slimmed her down a bit; still, she'll never be thin, and in truth she doesn't care to be. She keeps her dark brown hair shoulder-length, but wears it up at the office. She's chosen a brown and white Collie for her Hishu form, which her packmates tease her about a little. But she has nothing to prove: she's picked up some fighting skills since she's started running with a pack, and as unassuming as her "Lassie" forms might be, her teeth and claws bite deep when they must.

Star Hound

Quote: (Cold, silent stare.)

Background: Star Hounds are spirits associated with the great spirit Sirius, and are apparently created by him. None are known to serve other spirits or to associate with spirit choirs.

Description: Star Hounds all look like large dogs, but come in a variety of breeds and shapes. Most are lean, with bones showing under their skin, and all have vacant eyes that glow with cold white light. They speak little, and when they do, all Hounds speak with the same chilling voice and inflection... presumably, that of Sirius himself. Star Hounds radiate the same subtle disquiet and chill that Sirius does when he appears in dreams and visions.

Storytelling Hints: Star Dogs don't have much in the way of personality or individuality. Other spirits' difficult personalities at least make for interesting encounters, but Sirius' servants have little to say. Star Hounds arrive, perform the task for which they were sent or summoned, and then depart. These spirits never serve as pack totems, even to members of the Cult of the Dog.

Rank: 4

Attributes: Power 8, Finesse 10, Resistance 6

Willpower: 14

Essence: 25

Initiative: 16

Defense: 10

Speed: 25

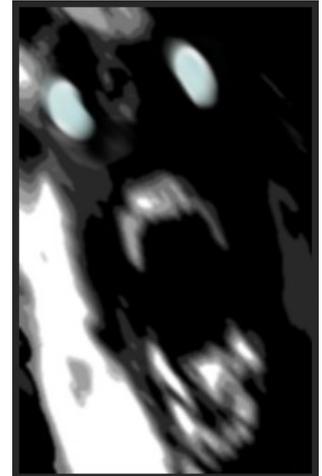
Size: 5

Corpus: 11

Influences: Dogs ●●, Loyalty ●, Stars ●

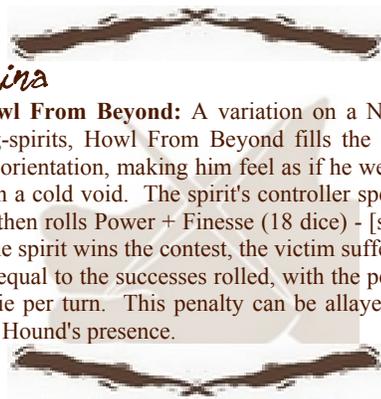
Numina: Chorus, Discorporation, *Howl From Beyond*, Know the Path (as Gift), Material Vision, Materialize, Wilds Sense

Bans: Star Hounds refuse to speak with any werewolves not members of the Cult of the Dog. If witnessing danger to humans or Dog Cultists, Star Hounds must defend them.



New Numina

Howl From Beyond: A variation on a Numen used by common dog-spirits, Howl From Beyond fills the opponent with dread and disorientation, making him feel as if he were falling endlessly through a cold void. The spirit's controller spends a point of Essence and then rolls Power + Finesse (18 dice) - [subject's Composure]. If the spirit wins the contest, the victim suffers a penalty to all die pools equal to the successes rolled, with the penalty decreasing by one die per turn. This penalty can be allayed if the victim flees the Star Hound's presence.



Our old pack totem, Baying Dog, just disappeared about two years ago. We woke up one day and our connection to him was gone. We checked the Shadow, and there was no sign there was a fight or anything, or any trace of him; it was like he just didn't exist anymore. Bay was a good spirit, once we swayed him to our service, and beyond the massive inconvenience this caused, we were all sad to see him go. It was really hard to find another totem after we up and lost the first one, let me tell you.

Anyway, one night last month my pack and I came across something weird in a small park bordering our territory: a bunch of dogs running around in circles, howling. When we decided to check it out, they all shifted to Hishu or Dalu and told us to back off - seems they weren't dogs after all. Mick decided to challenge these guys, because he didn't think any of the People that ran around pretending to be dogs could present much opposition; he's the alpha, so we followed his lead, and the rest of us didn't think much of these wannabe-weredogs either. They were Uratha alright, and weren't pushovers like we thought they would be, but I'm pretty sure we would've taken 'em.

But then Baying Dog manifested beside the other pack, and it all went bad.

I know it was the same spirit, he had the same scars and spots and big floppy ears. Except it really wasn't him anymore. He had glowing white eyes and looked all hollowed-out and starved. And he didn't recognize us at all. The Spirit formerly known as Baying Dog howled, and his voice was all different and awful and cold, like it came from the bottom of a dark well or something. We all pretty much lost it at that point, and got the hell out of there.

We all keep talking about wanting to go back and find that pack, and beat some goddamned answers out of 'em. But at the same time, deep inside, that's the last thing in the world I really want to do. I think the others feel the same way, even Mick, because we aren't making any plans to do that. There's enough for us to do, anyway.

Uratha turning into dogs, totems disappearing and then turning up all demonic... what the hell, man?