

# Future Shocks

## by James A. Moore

Future Shocks is the third and final part of a three-part story for *Werewolf: The Apocalypse, Second Edition*, designed with four to six Garou in mind. Part one, *Forgotten Lessons*, appeared in issue #42. Part two, *Present Dangers*, was in last issue. You can use all three parts together or adapt each to stand on its own.

### What's Gone Before

*Future Shocks* continues the battle against Malafaxus the Wyrms-Walker, the Bane that now possesses the body of Thomas "Hastoodar" WaltheFord. WaltheFord is the Black Spiral Dancer who escaped the characters in *Forgotten Lessons* and in *Present Dangers* was faced on his home turf in New York's abandoned subway tunnels. WaltheFord was infected by the Wyrms-Walker even as the characters faced him and his Black Spiral pack mates.

At the end of last issue's episode, the Wyrms-Walker emerged from and took control of Hastoodar, acting as a medium for Bai to travel from the Umbra to this world. WaltheFord, as we knew him, is dead.

Leaving the characters to contend with Banes in the subways, the restored Wyrms-Walker pursues its own agenda in New York City. It seeks out the descendant of Tricks-The-Wyrms, an ancient

enemy who originally bound the creature to the earth. Unfortunately, the Wyrms-Walker's target is also the Garou that the characters must find, for she is the only one who knows how to do away with Malafaxus once and for all. All the characters have to do is reach their savior, Chases-After-Shadows, before the Wyrms-Walker does.

### Part 3 of a 3 Part Story for



### SECOND EDITION

#### Theme

The theme of *Future Shocks* is one of salvation, specifically from the Wyrms. Malafaxus is capable of immense destruction. By defeating Malafaxus, the characters not only save themselves, but their Kin and Gaia herself.

#### Mood

Desperation fuels the Garou in their quest. They run a race against time as they strive to protect the lone Garou who knows how to defeat the Wyrms-Walker. The characters aren't being altruistic here. They're out to save themselves, too.

### Scene One: In the Wyrms' Footsteps

The characters have seen better days. They've dealt with a pack of Black Spiral Dancers, but Malafaxus is free again. Uktena in the characters' sept said they would

Malafaxus is a serious threat, and must be stopped before it brings ruin upon Gaia. The only sure way to defeat the Wyrms-Walker is keep its current body alive. If WaltheFord's body is destroyed, Malafaxus simply finds a new form to possess. The characters must put down the Bane as a *spirit*.



contact Chases-After-Shadows and recruit her aid. However, that would only be necessary if the characters failed to stop Malafaxus from being reborn. Now that the Bane is back, the characters must find the elder Uktena, but where is she, and where is the Wyrms-Walker headed?

At this stage, the characters probably have little choice but to follow the Wyrms-Walker and hope to buy time before Chases-After-Shadows can act.

Tracking Malafaxus in New York City is no easy task. Five cumulative successes are required at a difficulty of seven. (Use the tracking rules from the **Werewolf Second Edition** rulebook.) A tracking roll is made for every 30 minutes of searching for and following the Bane's trail.

The Scent of the Prey Gift and Rite of the Questing Stone can also be used to track Malafaxus. They have more immediate results than tracking, and put characters closer on the Bane's trail, but characters still don't catch up with the creature until all are in the Umbra (see below). Keep in mind, too, that characters must know Malafaxus' name if using Rite of the Questing Stone (they may have learned the Bane's name by interpreting the writings on the bearskins that the Wyrms-Walker was originally bound in).

As fate would have it, the Wyrms-Walker is also trying to locate the descendant of Tricks-the-Wyrms. Malafaxus believes — and correctly so — that Chases-After-Shadows knows the Rite of Holding, which can imprison the Bane. However, without the Binding Stones (which the characters undoubtedly recovered in Part Two), the Rite is useless. Malafaxus wants revenge on Tricks-The-Wyrms, regardless of how many it's generations removed.

The characters' pursuit of Malafaxus leads them due north, almost to the far reaches of Manhattan Island. There the trail suddenly ends. It disappears in a back alley at what appears to be the makeshift home of a street person. This is actually the current living space of Chases-After-Shadows. She's come off the reservation to study urban legends and lives the street life to learn the basic truths of city existence.

The box that was Chases-After-Shadows' home has been torn apart and her "possessions" have been scattered. It doesn't take much thought to realize that Malafaxus was responsible.

Among the scattered objects is a bird's claw. Theurge characters can recognize its significance on an Intelligence + Rituals roll, difficulty five. Otherwise, characters may spot it simply because of its oddity. Chases-After-Shadows bound a messenger spirit into this talon, to inform the characters of her intentions. The character picking up the claw suddenly has a thought in a mental voice other than his own. It says: "I await you at the beast's resting place, beyond the veil. Waylay its coming that the preparations may be made, for it pursues me with a fury. Think of my Great Father and fare well."

A couple clues — the sudden end to Malafaxus' trail and Chases-After-Shadows' supposed location — should indicate that the two are in the Umbra and that the characters should resume their pursuit there. Their

destination should be the Umbra's reflection of the Waltham Industrial Park, the earthly construction site where Malafaxus was once buried and has since been exhumed.

The Gauntlet in the city is rated eight. Once in New York's Umbra, the characters are in totally unfamiliar territory. In Part Two of this series, the characters may have sought the help of the Sept of the Green and had the Bone Gnawer Fengy as a guide. However, Fengy probably fled when the characters confronted the Black Spirals or Malafaxus itself. *Future Shocks* therefore presumes that the characters lack a guide in the city and its Umbral reflection.

### *The Umbrascape of NYC*

With the exception of the Sept of the Green, the city's Umbrascape is a blighted, filthy pit of corruption. Banes of all shapes and sizes roam, and Garou do well to avoid conflicts. As long as the characters are quiet, the Banes fail to take notice of them. The most common Banes are Skrags, Psychomachiae and Kalus, but there are many Blight Children about.

In addition to Banes, Weaverlings roam this stretch of the Umbra, doing the Weaver's work and maintaining their stranglehold on the city. Weaverlings are more likely to molest Garou, as they try to protect their domain from the Wyld. However, Glass Walkers are capable of dealing with the Weaverlings, using Gifts to convince them to let the pack pass in peace.

The Umbra's New York is made up of menacing constructs built from the webs of Weaverlings. The constructs are located relative to those of the physical realm. The "city" sky is black, illuminated only by flashes of lightning as electricity elementals surge through the air, pursuing whatever errands compel them.

The Wyrms-Walker leaves the city in pursuit of Chases-After-Shadows and heads directly for the Umbra's construction site near Utica.

The difficulty of tracking Malafaxus in the Umbra is eight, and another five cumulative successes (one rolled for every hour of searching and tracking) are required to locate the Wyrms-Walker. Of course, if the characters know the region or the way to Utica, they might be able to find Malafaxus without tracking the Bane. However, the Umbra is always rife with dangers and they might lead the characters from their target.

By the time the characters catch up with Malafaxus, all are out of the city in an area filled more with spirits than with Banes. The Umbra here reflects farmlands rather than stark buildings. The pack is closer to Gaia, but the urgency of the pack's mission mounts. Instead, the Wyrms-Walker doesn't threaten a bleak, dismal place where the Wyrms is already winning. Here it threatens lands still held by Gaia and preserved by humans who care for the earth. Where the Garou were once surrounded by Blight Children, here the Naturae are dominant, but vulnerable to the Wyrms-Walker's corruption. The Gauntlet is only five here, but that might change if the characters can't defeat the Bane.

## Scene Two: Wyrms Hunt

Sooner or later the characters track down Malafaxus in transit. But how do they deal with it? Touching the Bane is dangerous, as the characters know, for it can mean infection by the Wyrms and the rebirth of Malafaxus in yet another body. (Although the Rite of Cleansing purifies the infected.) Very few weapons present themselves in the characters' Umbral pursuit of the Wyrms-Walker. Even if they did, the Wyrms-Walker has had time to recover all its strength, invigorated by its mission of revenge. And besides, killing the thing only allows the spirit to reform in another body that may have been infected elsewhere. Ultimately, the characters must fall back to Chases-After-Shadows' Rite of Holding. The Garou just have to buy time and hold off Malafaxus from its destination until the Uktena is ready. When will that be? There's no way to tell. The characters just have to do their best.

If the characters think back to Chases-After-Shadows' message, it may occur to them to use trickery and guile, as the Uktena's ancestor Tricks-The-Wyrms did when he first imprisoned the Bane. If characters take Chases-After-Shadows' advice, they earn Wisdom points (see *Renown*, below).

Ragabash pack members should be right at home playing games with Malafaxus, and players should be encouraged to be creative in their deceptions.

The characters' current locale in the Umbra is inhabited by both Banes and spirits. Theurge characters can use the Spirit Speech Gift to solicit aid from local spirits.

If one of the pack is Uktena, or even poses as Chases-After-Shadows (a Manipulation + Performance or Subterfuge roll is required, difficulty of seven), Malafaxus can be temporarily confused. Although the characters don't know what Chases-After-Shadows looks like, neither does the Wyrms-Walker. The Bane finally realizes what's going on with a successful resisted Wits + Performance or Subterfuge roll of six (against the character's Manipulation roll). Competing rolls are made every turn that someone poses as Chases-After-Shadows. Each of the posing characters' successes in this contest cancels out one of Malafaxus' successes. The Bane need only win once to see through the deception.

It's always possible that all or part of the pack can slow the Bane by using the Taunt Maneuver, as Malafaxus is furious, not fully rational. This sort of delaying tactic is exactly what's needed to prevent the Wyrms-Walker from catching up with Chases-After-Shadows.

If the characters really want to risk their lives, perhaps as a last, desperate measure, they may produce the Binding Stones (assuming they're carrying them). Malafaxus immediately concentrates on getting the Stones, for destroying them would end any threat of being imprisoned. If the Bane does get a hold of the Stones, the characters better commit everything they have to retrieving them or the Bane will be forever free.





The Garou should be rewarded for outthinking the Bane. Their bravery can be awarded with Glory, but their cunning and insight should be awarded with Wisdom (again, see *Renown*).

### *Scene Three: The Final Rite*

The characters know the time for the Rite of Holding is nigh when an echoing howl is heard across the Umbrascape. In it the lingering words, "Come for me Malafaxus, the daughter of Tricks-The-Wyrm awaits you". are heard. At that the enraged Bane immediately turns and heads full speed toward the Umbra's version of the Utica construction site.

Chases-After-Shadows wants to confront the Bane in the Umbra so that it may be defeated there as a spirit, thus keeping it from reentering the material world. The Wyrm-Walker doesn't care where it faces Chases-After-Shadows, as long as it can destroy her.

The Umbra's construction site consists of fouled earth torn from the Bane's grave; debris is spewed across the countryside. A hole gapes where the creature once "lay." Loose earth literally crawls and squirms upon the ground, as if alive with corruption. No machinery nor concrete exists in the Umbra's reflection of the place, but all reflections of life are obliterated.

The site also swarms with Banes, lured there since the Wyrm-Walker's burial site was first disturbed. So far the Banes have been kept from Chases-After-Shadows by the Uktena's own efforts, but now that she must perform the Rite of Holding, the characters must deal with the Banes. A Theurge can act as Chases-After-Shadows' guardian, creating a ward against the creatures.

Chases-After-Shadows has arranged ritual markings and fetishes all around the open grave, and several long, thick leather thongs lie before her. The Uktena shouts for the Garou (excluding any Theurges in the group) to grab the thongs and bind the Bane while she performs the Rite.

If the characters need help, or you feel it heightens the drama of the scene, Chases-After-Shadows can have two young Uktena with her. Their purpose is to help the characters bind Malafaxus with the thongs. This is to be the pups' Rite of Passage, if they survive it.

Malafaxus knows what the characters are doing with the thongs — the Bane was once similarly bound with bear skins. It therefore fights to break free of any hold, to get at Chases-After-Shadows. Taunting Malafaxus still has some influence over it, as its rage intensifies at the threat of being captured.

To determine the characters' success in binding the Bane, use the Grappling rules from **Werewolf Second Edition**. Each character involved in the conflict must succeed in a Grappling effort for the Bane to be secured. Characters who have already succeeded may tie their thongs to objects in the Umbral landscape — a rock or withered ree — and help those still struggling with the Wyrm-Walker.

If all goes well, the pack should manage to entangle the Bane and tie it in place. When that is accomplished,

all the lesser Banes in the vicinity swarm Malafaxus, trying to break its bonds. In the meantime, the characters (including any Theurges formerly keeping the local Banes at bay) are hurriedly called upon to join Chases-After-Shadows in the Rite of Holding. Each pack member who joins in is required to maintain a chant introduced by Chases-After-Shadows, and must sacrifice one Gnosis point.

With that, Malafaxus' spirit is pulled from the body of Thomas Waltheferd, and drawn by a great vortex into the Umbral grave. The earth that crawls and squirms about the ground is pulled into the hole with the spirit, "burying" it in the Umbra's "ground." All the while, Malafaxus' spirit screams and spits until its cries are finally stifled. The small Banes that remain are driven in all directions in a buzz of fury, frustration and fright.

### **The Rite Of Holding**

#### Level Four

This powerful Rite was once performed regularly by the Croatan and Uktena. The purpose of the Rite is to force a Bane into slumber, making certain that it's powerless. Since the destruction of the Croatan, the Rite has been performed less frequently over the years. The Rite usually requires that Binding Stone fetishes be created and bound to a specific Bane. From that point forward the Stones are attuned to and can only affect that Bane.

Execution of the Rite of Holding requires at least 10 Gnosis points. The Rite requires significant preparation and trappings, but is performed in short order. Once a Bane is affected and put to slumber, the Rite must be performed at least once every five years or the Bane begins to awaken. Once the Bane is fully awake, the Binding Stones are all that stand between the Bane and freedom. Should the Binding Stones be removed, the once-trapped Bane may return to the world, free to spread the Wyrm's influence again.

At present time there are only a handful of Garou who know this powerful Rite. They normally travel from place to place, performing the service. Over the years, however, many of the Wyrm's trapped minions have been forgotten, as the Garou that cared for them have fallen.

(Note: To ensure that Malafaxus will not return to Gaia's realm, Chases-After-Shadows has added certain elements to the Rite that separate the Bane as a spirit from the physical form it possesses. Thus the Uktena is able to "bury" the Bane itself in the Umbra, and no further performance of the Rite is necessary.)

With the spirit form of Malafaxus trapped in the Umbra, the corpse of Thomas Waltheferd remains in possession of the Garou. They may do with it as they please. Perhaps the option with the most poetic justice is to step sideways, back to the material world, to bury the

body in the very hole Waltheford created — to make him a permanent part of the corruption of his industrial complex. And even if construction has stopped, Waltheford's remains can be left at the scene of his crime, to be tormented by Banes frustrated with his failing the Wyrms.

As an alternative to this finale, you can arrange for Malafaxus and its human body, once bound by the characters, are returned to and buried in the material world. That way there's the continued threat that Malafaxus might return, requiring that the Rite of Holding must be performed regularly. Perhaps this is a duty the characters, particularly any Theurges or Uktena, assume, making it their mission in life. This particular resolution engenders respect for the past and recognition of tradition — certainly cornerstones of Garou culture.

### ***Complications***

What happens if the characters can't beat Malafaxus, or the Bane gets to Chases-After-Shadows? The characters may still possess the Binding Stones. Perhaps they can undergo a vision quest to learn Tricks-The-Wyrm's Rite, and then hunt down the Wyrms-Walker. In the meantime, the Bane may pursue the characters to destroy the Stones, may go off to cause harm and corruption to Gaia or seek to release other Banes trapped ages ago.

If Chases-After-Shadows survives, what relations do the characters have with her? Sure she helped defeat Malafaxus, but maybe she's a bitch. She could hold her success over the characters' heads or expect some help in return.

Is the legacy of Tricks-The-Wyrm put to rest with the Wyrms-Walker? Perhaps, just as they return to the material world, the characters spy a lone wolf watching over Malafaxus' Umbral burial site. The wolf fits the description of the legendary Tricks-The-Wyrm.

Does construction on The Waltheford Industrial Complex continue? If characters can get Andrew Harrison and Lila Westerly (see Part One), the Garou investors behind the project, to witness what's transpired and what is buried on the site, construction might be stopped. But, maybe they insist that the Bane be buried elsewhere (if it's being buried in the earth at all), creating a further rift between tribes.

And if construction does stop, does Kurt Larson (see Part One), Garou son of the contractor hired for the project, seek out the characters to get revenge?

As far as the general public is concerned, philanthropist Thomas Waltheford has disappeared. Are characters who protested the construction of his complex suspects in his disappearance?

### ***Renown***

The Wyrms-Walker is considered a very powerful Wyrms minion for the purposes of rewarding Renown. The pack members who understand Chases-After-Shadows' reference to Trick-The-Wyrm and use guile to waylay the Bane receive two Wisdom Renown. Any Theurge among the characters who protects Chases-



After-Shadows from attacking Banes receives one Wisdom Renown. And any Garou who makes a significant personal sacrifice in defending Chases-The-Wyrm receives one Honor and one Wisdom Renown.

## ***Chases-After-Shadows***

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**Breed:** Homid

**Auspice:** Theurge

**Tribe:** Uktena

**Attributes:** Strength 5 (7/9/6/6), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 4 (6/7/7/6), Charisma 4, Manipulation 5 (4/2/2/2), Appearance 2 (0/0/2/2), Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

**Abilities:** Alertness 4, Area Knowledge 5, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Drive 2, Empathy 3, Enigmas 4, Etiquette 4, Expression 4, Firearms 3, Intimidation 3, Leadership 4, Linguistics 3, Medicine 3, Melee 3, Occult 4, Performance 3, Primal-Urge 4, Repair 4, Rituals 5, Stealth 5, Survival 5

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 5, Kinfolk 3, Past Life 5

**Gifts:** (1) Mother's Touch, Persuasion, Sense Magic, Sense Wyrm, Shroud, Spirit Speech; (2) Command Spirit, Jam Technology, Name the Spirit, Sight from Beyond, Spirit of the Bird; (3) Call the Flame Spirit, Disquiet, Invisibility; (4) Call Elemental, Hand of the Earth Lords

**Rank:** 4

Rage 6, Gnosis 8, Willpower 8

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

**Rites:** (1) Gathering for the Departed, Moot Rite; Rite of Binding, Rite of Contrition; (2) Rite of Spirit Awakening, Rite of Passage, Rite of Ostracism; (3) Rite of the Fetish, The Hunt, Rite of the Totem; (4) Rite of the Holding, Rite of the Opened Bridge

**Fetishes:** Binding Stones, Sanctuary Chimes

**Image:** Chases-After-Shadows can normally be found wearing blue jeans and a leather vest. She prefers sandals to full shoes. More often than not her thin body is unwashed, and her long black hair is pulled into a braid, into which are woven feathers and beads.

**Roleplaying Notes:** The only thing you desire more than peace and harmony with Gaia is knowledge. Like your ancestor, you seek to solve the riddles of the spirit world for the betterment of all. Much of your time is spent trying to find some hint of what became of the Croatan.

**History:** Chases-After-Shadows has always followed the solitary path. Whenever possible she has traveled to the Umbra to learn about spirits. She's responsible for bringing several powerful spirits back to various caerns, for the purpose of creating fetishes, and is looked upon as wise — extremely wise — for her years. Chases-After-Shadows is 37 years old.

## ***Malafaxus, The Wyrm-Walker***

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See Part One, *Forgotten Lessons*, in WHITE WOLF Magazine #42 for the Wyrm-Walker's profile. The Bane is at full strength in this episode.

