

Present Dangers

by James A. Moore

Present Dangers is the second episode of a three-part story for **Werewolf: The Apocalypse, Second Edition**, designed with four to six Garou in mind. Part One, *Forgotten Lessons*, appeared last issue. Part Three, *Future Shocks*, will be in issue #44 (June). You can use all three parts together or adapt each to stand on its own.

What's Gone Before

Present Dangers continues the battle against a powerful Bane, Malafaxus the Wyrms-Walker, and Thomas "Hastoodar" Waltheford, a Black Spiral Dancer. Waltheford is responsible for the desecration of a site held sacred by the Uktena and Wendigo, and consequently is responsible for the release of the Wyrms-Walker, the Bane that was buried there. At the end of *Forgotten Lessons*, the characters confronted and probably destroyed the physical form of Malafaxus, but Waltheford doubtless escaped.

In the brief battle that Waltheford himself fought with the Wyrms-Walker, which broke away from his control, Waltheford was unwittingly infected by the Walker's corruption. Furthermore, several of the fetishes (the Binding Stones) that were used by ancient Garou to imprison the Wyrms-Walker were cast aside.

A Task Ahead of Them

Beyond being a vile individual, Thomas Waltheford is a Black Spiral Dancer (named Hastoodar). He acquired the exhumed remains of the Wyrms-Walker to back the Hive of Spirals he's forming in New York City.

Through research, characters can learn that Waltheford owns several pieces of land, many of which have become industrial cesspools. Extensive investigation reveals that Waltheford has ties to Pentex (which characters probably uncovered in Part One).

It should be clear, then, that the characters need to find Thomas Waltheford and put an end to his ways.

After defeating the first incarnation of the Wyrms-Walker in *Forgotten Lessons*, the Garou can search for Waltheford in New York City, where Waltheford was headed for before being waylaid.

Finding Waltheford probably requires that characters get help. Contacting the Sept of the Green, located in Central

Park, is an obvious option. (All pertinent information about the sept and its members can be found in **Werewolf: The Apocalypse, Second Edition**.)

Can the Garou find Hastoodar before the Wyrms-Walker rises again? Can they take Hastoodar alive to ensure the Wyrms-Walker is defeated once and for all?

Theme

Responsibility is the theme of *Present Dangers*. The characters' enemy, Waltheford, has escaped. He must be

Part 2 of a 3 Part Story for



SECOND EDITION



The Binding Stones

If the characters have saved up and bought a clue, they probably salvage the now-abandoned fetishes and bear skins that bound the Wyrms-Walker. An Uktena in the Garou's sept can explain the purpose of the fetishes: they were made to hold Malafaxus indefinitely, as long as the proper rituals were performed over the being's bound form.

To hold the Bane again, the fetishes must be recharged. The ritual of recharging can be performed by elder Utkena in the characters' sept. Indeed, characters are asked to participate, each spending one point of Gnosis in the ritual, making them part of the Stones' power. However, the ritual to bind Malafaxus and silence him forever is known by a lone Uktena elder. As fate would have it, she resides in New York City, but she's also the target of Malafaxus' wrath (see below); the characters must preserve the lone Garou long enough for her to save them and the city. In other words, look to Part Three of this story.

As for the bear skins, a series of pictograms drawn upon them (interpreted with a successful Wits + Enigmas roll at difficulty 7) tells characters the tale of the Bane, including how it was subdued and imprisoned centuries ago. The ancient Garou Tricks-The-Wyrm is named as Malafaxus' conquerer, and Uktena elders know of his legend. In fact, an ancestor of the hero — the only known ancestor — is known to exist, and makes her home in New York City!

The pictograms on the bear skins also tell that the Wyrms-Walker can preserve itself by planting its seed within the living, allowing it to return even after "defeated."

Thus, the characters may fear that Thomas Waltheferd has been infected by the Bane, and, if they encountered it in Part One, the Garou may fear that they also carry the creature's seed. Characters should go through the Rite of Cleansing to purify themselves. However, if Waltheferd has been infected, the Garou have all the more reason to find him — or face the Wyrms-Walker again!

In the meantime, Uktena elders of the characters sept work to make contact with Chases-After-Shadows, the descendant of Tricks-The-Wyrm. The elders know that, by heritage and tradition, Chases-After-Shadows has the knowledge to stop the Wyrms-Walker. All she needs are the tools of the binding ritual — the Binding Stones — and she can imprison Malafaxus again.

If the characters can't find Hastoodar and stop the spread of the Wyrms-Walker's corruption before the Bane manifests, they must deliver the Binding Stones to Chases-After-Shadows (and so should take the Stones on their journey to New York City). As it turns out, Chases-After-Shadows is the very Garou that the Wyrms-Walker seeks out, wanting revenge for its past entrapment, even if that revenge is generations removed. Can the characters keep Chases-After-Shadows alive long enough to stop the Wyrms-Walker? That's a tale told in part three of this series.

recovered and the lessons of the past must be relearned if the Wyrms-Walker is to be destroyed. As the ones indirectly responsible for the Wyrms-Walker's continued existence, the pack must defeat the Bane once and for all.

Mood

Anxiety hangs oppressively in the air. The pack must locate a Black Spiral Dancer, a sworn enemy of the Garou, and make certain that his corruption does not spread. Worse still, the Black Spiral is likely to have allies. The Garou must not only face them in unfamiliar territory, but in their very lair.

Scene One: Welcome to New York

If the Garou are from the New York City area, there's a good chance that they belong to the Sept of the Green. If that's so, relationships within the sept take precedence over contacts and agreements discussed here.

It's more likely that characters are not from New York and do not belong to the Sept of the Green. There are several ways for them to reach New York City:

through the Umbra, walking, driving or arriving by Moon Bridge.

Once in the city, characters still have to track Hastoodar (Waltheferd) to his lair. (Characters with Scent of the Prey can't automatically track Malafaxus because the Bane is not fully manifest. And, to successfully use the Rite of the Questing Stone, characters must know Waltheferd's Black Spiral name, which they don't have at this time.) Hastoodar is familiar with New York City; the pack may not be. The characters may need a guide. For the sake of assistance and etiquette, the Garou should probably visit the Sept of the Green.

The Sept of the Green is central to this story. Even if the Garou don't introduce themselves, sept members seek them out; some members of the sept make it a point to know the comings and goings of strange Garou. Fengy (see **Werewolf Second Edition**), in particular, follows the pack, watching and bolting if the characters come too close. Fengy reports any transgressions to Mother Larissa, the leader of the sept.

If asked politely or forced to help, Fengy assists the pack, but his willing aid is more productive. Fengy knows the city as only a Bone Gnawer can: he knows the

sewers, streets and subways. While he can't point to where Hastoodar is, he can select likely places to search. If he's browbeaten into helping, he leads the pack to the most dangerous parts of town and offers no warning of danger.

The Sept of the Green is led by Bone Gnawers, although any who follow their rules are allowed to remain in the city. The Bone Gnawers are justified in demanding a certain amount of respect in their home town.

New York is not a friendly city, especially in the World of Darkness. By day, fomori stalk the streets; by night, they're joined by vampires. Neither group is known for its tolerance of Garou, and while the city's Kindred have an agreement of mutual non-aggression with New York's Garou, they only honor it as far as the Garou do. Any attempts to assault Kindred or force help from them results in a resurgence of old hostilities. Obviously, the Sept of the Green frowns on any relations characters have with Kindred. The pack is only visiting; members of the sept must live here.

Mother Larissa welcomes any who visit her. Sept members have not heard of Hastoodar (but might have common knowledge of Thomas WaltheFord). As long as the characters honor the sept's rules, Mother Larissa offers Fengy as a guide in the characters' search.

The rules of the sept are all-important to Mother Larissa. Anyone who breaks them is barred from the city. Characters who harass the city's Kindred or mages are lucky to get away alive.

As for Fengy, he doesn't have a pack of his own. If the characters are friendly, they may inadvertently adopt a new pack member. Despite his nervousness and paranoia, Fengy desperately wants friends.

Scene Two: The Hunt for Hastoodar

The biggest problem facing the pack at this point is finding Hastoodar in a city of ten million people. They undoubtedly suspect that he's here because he was headed here before Malafaxus broke free.

At least the Garou have a few clues to go on. Thomas WaltheFord is the owner of his own company and, while his personal residence is unlisted, the Pentex subsidiary has an address and phone number.

WaltheFord Land Development, Inc. is in the *Yellow Pages*. Its headquarters is on Fifth Avenue, in the Hartsburg Building across from Central Park. WaltheFord's offices are open during regular business hours.

WaltheFord himself is not at the building. The only items present in his personal, fifth story office are a solitary desk, a computer, a phone and an answering machine. There are no messages currently on the machine. A little detective work or time spent on the computer offers some leads.

An Intelligence + Computer roll (difficulty 6, three successes required) allows characters access to all files on the computer. The files consist largely of simple business contracts; one file lists addresses. While WaltheFord's



own address is not in the listing, there are entries for names that appear to be gibberish. They are Willstrad, Forbandry and Unk. A simple Wits + Enigmas roll (difficulty 6 required) allows characters to realize that these could be the names of allies, maybe even Black Spiral Dancers (which they are).

All three names are listed with different addresses, but all addresses are in the part of town called Hell's Kitchen. If Fengy accompanies the pack, he eagerly points out that he knows where each address is located. He even volunteers to show the way. Each seedy apartment on the list looks lived-in, but is currently unoccupied. The Black Spirals are all in their "Hive" (see below).

Resourceful Garou can also break into other offices in the building. The company's main files list Waltheford's address. His home is in Utica, not far from where the Wurm-Walker was exhumed.

It's quite possible that characters charge all the way back to Utica to confront Waltheford. If they do, they waste precious time. Waltheford does have a house there, but it hasn't been occupied for some time (Waltheford, as Hastoodar, has been working in New York City to gather his "Hive" and plan for the future).

Hell's Kitchen Hive

Hell's Kitchen is a vile, decrepit place, populated by the homeless and hopeless. Many buildings are condemned and unfit for living, but are nevertheless sought for shelter.

This is the place where Hastoodar and his group have decided to set up their Hive (actually, they're more of a pack, but Hastoodar's conceit demands more prestige).

While this site is not yet a genuine Hive, it's come to the attention of some Banes. The desolation of Hell's Kitchen, coupled with the desperation of its inhabitants, holds a powerful attraction for the Wurm. Thus, the Wurm's Banes do all they can to assist the Black Spirals of Hell's Kitchen. Hastoodar and his splinter group from the Dank Well Hive plan to make Hell's Kitchen their own.

At present, Kindred invade the area at night, stalking victims and dealing drugs. Hastoodar pays them little mind, and in turn, they pay little attention to the Hive. Hastoodar has no need to sell drugs and cares only about spreading the Wurm's corruption. As far as he's concerned, the vampires only aid in that spread, and Hastoodar's Hivemates have gone so far as to protect local Kindred.

Hastoodar's Hive lies beneath the street's slums, in a section of an abandoned subway tunnel. Maps of these forgotten tunnels are extremely difficult to acquire, if they exist at all. Fengy suggests the tunnels as a possible location of Hastoodar. Fortunately, he knows where the tunnels are and knows the best ways to get into them. (The Black Spirals use a secret entrance leading from their Bawn in Hell's Kitchen.)

One forgotten subway tunnel leads all the way to Manhattan and offers access to Central Park and the Garou caern located there. Hastoodar has known of the caern's existence for some time and is busily plotting the best way to corrupt it from within. The only thing that's stopped him so far is fear of retribution. He has not yet gauged the number of Garou that use the caern, and he's wary of playing his hand too soon.

Even without Fengy's aid, characters can deduce that Hastoodar has gone underground by using the Sense Wurm Gift, but they must be in Hell's Kitchen before the Gift is sufficiently sensitive.

Garou without appropriate Gifts must find the Black Spirals' trail and follow it to the Hive (see the tracking rules in the **Werewolf Second Edition** rulebook). An extended roll of five successes against a difficulty of 6 is required. Characters can make as many attempts as they want. Each roll represents 30 minutes of searching. Once five successes are accomplished, the characters follow the trail of the Black Spirals from Hell's Kitchen to the perimeter of their underground Hive.

Getting safely to the Hive isn't easy, though. Dangers loom, especially at night. By day, there are several Sabbat ghouls in and around the tunnels, and by night, Garou may find themselves face to face with Sabbat vampires. The statistics for both can be found in the **Werewolf: The Apocalypse, Second Edition** rulebook.

Although Hastoodar and his followers are dangerous, and are difficult to reach, they are not invulnerable. The formation of their Hive puts them in direct opposition to the Abyss Leaper Hive, another group of Black Spirals claiming the city as its own. Even if the characters can't defeat the Hell's Kitchen Hive, it's only a matter of time before the Abyss Leapers learn of them.

Garou can try to contact the Abyss Leapers to help destroy Hastoodar's pack. Even if characters can convince the Black Spirals to help, members of the Hell's Kitchen Hive and the characters are targets for destruction, corruption and initiation into the Leapers. Even if outnumbered by the Hell's Kitchen Hive, characters might be better off going it alone.

Facing Hastoodar

The Hell's Kitchen Hive is weakly guarded. A couple hundred yards from the den is a Kalus planted by Hastoodar. The creature projects corrupt thoughts upon trespassers, hoping to distract them. When the Garou reach the Kalus, it projects thoughts of frustration and anger. You can choose the target, but make it someone who might turn on his companions or try to go off on a separate agenda, waylaying the group from its purpose.

One of the Hive members, Willstrad, is also on guard, as indicated on the Hive map. Each character hoping to sneak up on Willstrad must roll at least five cumulative successes on a Dexterity + Stealth roll against a difficulty of seven. One roll is made for every turn of a character's approach. A single failure indicates minor noise. After a total of three failures, sufficient noise has been made to alert Willstrad of intruders.

If Willstrad is only alerted to the Garou's approach when they're on top of him, he fights, hoping to get away to warn the others. If he's warned early enough, he tries to spy on the group, ascertain their strength and *then* warn the others.

If the characters are lucky, they can sneak up on the Hive and surprise all four members. If the Black Spirals are ready for a fight, they deal with the characters according to their personalities (see their profiles, below).

Hastoodar himself has been tucked away at the Hive since his return from Utica. Without the Wyrms-Walker in his possession—indeed, after being attacked by it—he's recovering and planning his next move. The seed of the Wyrms within him continues to grow, and Hastoodar feels ill, but he assumes his condition is the result of the Wyrms-Walker's attack. Little does he know what is about to happen.

Should the fight go in favor of the Black Spirals, they choose to capture Garou rather than kill them. Hastoodar wants to recruit as many Hive members as he can and wants to see the characters corrupted by the Wyrms. Unfortunately, the Wyrms-Walker makes its move before anyone can be tainted.

The Spirals are far from organized. They tend to fight amongst themselves and work independently of each other. This is their greatest weakness, one characters can make use of, perhaps by luring individual Spirals into traps and confrontations they can't hope to win. If the fight goes in the characters' favor, they're allowed an opportunity to vindicate Gaia before all hell breaks loose. (If Hastoodar is badly beaten by the characters, keep him alive, if only barely so, long enough for the Wyrms-Walker to come into its own.)

When one group seems close to victory, the Wyrms-Walker makes its move. Hastoodar suddenly lurches and



Hell's Kitchen Hive Map

Wharmack
is Enter
Here

Solid
Rock

Debris

Guard
Post

Solid
Rock

Debris

Access
Tunnel to
Subways
(Concealed
at other
end)



contorts in agony. His skin stretches in sickly, unnatural ways. Suddenly, the skin across his chest erupts, spewing blood and flesh everywhere, leaving a great gaping hole where his rib cage used to be. From the depths of this grotesque cavity glows a pale gray light. Then the first of the Wyrms-Walker's Banes is released.

These Banes largely consist of Scraglings and Kalus, but they should be capable of distracting the Garou long enough for the Wyrms-Walker to pursue its own agenda. One Bane might have the Incite Frenzy Charm. If characters choose Berserk Frenzy, they must fight the Banes in front of them. If they choose Fox Frenzy, they flee the whole horrific scene. Not surprisingly, surviving or conscious Black Spirals flee the reborn Wyrms-Walker as soon as Hastoodar "loses it."

In the end, it's important that the Wyrms-Walker gets away, but characters may still capture or kill the remaining Black Spirals.

Complications

The characters have their work cut out for them. The Wyrms-Walker is back and must be faced again. By this time, characters may even notice that the being has some purpose, for it's always moving toward or into New York City. What is the creature's purpose, and how will the pack stop it?

Though they may have defeated the Hell's Kitchen Hive, the characters must decide what they will do with any defeated opponents. If they take them back to the caern in Central Park, a debate may develop over how to deal with the Spirals (although most probably want them destroyed).

Do surviving Black Spirals seek to bring the characters over to the Wyrms? Do they corrupt Garou belonging to the sept of the Green and escape?

If members of the Hell's Kitchen Hive escape, do they seek revenge on the characters? If they cause mayhem in the city and bring attention to New York's Garou, do the locals blame the characters for bringing trouble upon them?

Future Shocks, the third installment in this series, sets the stage for the Garou's final confrontation with the Wyrms-Walker. They must hunt it down before it finds and destroys its ancient enemy, a lone Garou who holds the knowledge necessary to bind Malafaxus once and for all.

Renown

For Renown purposes, Hastoodar is a strong minion of the Wyrms, while his Hivemates are only of average strength. Alerting the Sept of the Green to any danger to its caern earns each of the characters a Wisdom or Honor Renown point (assuming they can verify their claims).

Thomas Waltheford, "Hastoodar"

See Part One, *Forgotten Lessons* in WWM #42, for Hastoodar's profile.

Willstrad

Breed: Metis

Auspice: Ahroun

Tribe: Black Spiral Dancers

Attributes: Strength 5 (7/9/6/5), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/5), Charisma 1, Manipulation 4 (3/1/1/1), Appearance 0, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3
Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 1, Empathy 3, Expression 1, Intimidation 5, Primal-Urge 1, Streetwise 4, Drive 3, Firearms 3, Melee 4, Stealth 2, Survival 4, Enigmas 1, Investigations 3

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Past Life 1, Resources 1

Gifts: (1) Create Element, Persuasion, Resist Pain

Rank: 1

Rage 7, Gnosis 3, Willpower 5

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

Rites: None

Fetishes: None

Image: Willstrad is a brutal-looking Garou. His white fur is green in some places, and a blind third eye grows on his left cheek. Willstrad stands only seven feet tall in Crinos form, but makes up for his size by glowering at everyone around him.

Roleplaying Notes: You know you're inferior to most other Garou, but you never turn away from a fight. Your best defense is a good offense, and you do your best to pick fights in hopes that others back down.

History: Willstrad was dropped in the woods in the Adirondack Mountains, and the Black Spiral Dancers took him in. Even a Metis is a useful warrior against the Gaia Lovers.

Forbandry

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Ragabash

Tribe: Black Spiral Dancers

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

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawl 2, Dodge 5, Empathy 4, Expression 5, Intimidation 1, Streetwise 2, Drive 3, Etiquette 5, Firearms 1, Melee 1, Stealth 5, Survival 5, Enigmas 3, Investigations 4, Politics 4, Rituals 3

Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Kinfolk 4

Gifts: (1) Blur of the Milky Eye, Persuasion, Resist Pain; (2) Blissful Ignorance, Jam Technology

Rank: 2

Rage 4, Gnosis 9, Willpower 5

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

Rites: Rite of Contrition

Fetishes: Fang of Madness (Level 4, Gnosis 4): The Fang of Madness allows Forbandry to use the third level Black Spiral Dancer Gift: Foaming Fury. This dagger also causes Aggravated Damage.

Image: Forbandry is a very handsome Black Spiral Dancer with light blue eyes and blond fur. He always smiles politely, and apologetically, as if he really has no

desire to cause anyone any sort of harm, but feels obligated to do so given the company he keeps. Even in the darkest, dankest sewers, Forbandry insists on dressing like a swashbuckler.

Roleplaying Notes: Always attack men first, showing a preposterous amount of regard for the "fairer sex." Remember, sooner or later you'll wake up and all this will be over (see below). In the meantime, it would be wrong to mistreat a lady. You listen to Hastoodar only because he's more interesting to associate with than the Black Spiral Dancers at the Dank Well Hive.

History: Forbandry had no idea that he was a Black Spiral Dancer until he was kidnapped by the Dank Well Hive. Forbandry grew up reading action and fantasy novels, and is convinced that his current existence is just a bad dream. He anticipates awakening any time now. Forbandry's first Dance of the Black Spiral left him with this need to deny reality, and he fights anyone who tries to show him the error of his ways.

Unk

Breed: Lupus

Auspice: Philodox

Tribe: Black Spiral Dancers

Attributes: Strength 3 (5/7/6/5), Dexterity 5 (6/7/6/6), Stamina 5 (6/8/8/7), Charisma 2, Manipulation 1 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 1 (0/0/1), Perception 5, Intelligence 1, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 5, Brawl 3, Dodge 1, Empathy 4, Expression 4, Intimidation 5, Primal-Urge 5, Melee 4, Stealth 5, Survival 5

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Past Lives 2, Pure Breed 4, Totem 1

Gifts: (1) Scent of the True Form, Sense Prey, Leap of the Kangaroo; (2) Call to Duty, Sense the Unnatural

Rank: 2

Rage 6, Gnosis 8, Willpower 2

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

Rites: Baptism of Fire, Rite of Becoming

Fetishes: None

Image: A black wolf with broken teeth and a perpetual snarl, Unk is as pleasant to look at as a rabid mutt. His eyes are slightly crossed and bloodshot. His fur is matted; he's lived in filth for a very long time. His stench is enough to make most Garou gag.

Roleplaying Notes: Kill them. If they're not of the Hive, they're the enemy. If they're human, they're the enemy. If they're edible, they're the enemy. Bark at them if they come into your territory. If they don't heed your barks and snarls, rip their throats out and lap up their blood.

History: Unk's first change was unexpected, and the shocking transformation led to insanity. After almost a year as a Lunatic, Unk was trapped by the Black Spiral Dancers and forced to dance the Spiral. Since then, he has come to revel in his madness and to acknowledge that his power is a gift, not a curse.

Malafaxus the Wurm-Walker

Malafaxus should get away at the end of Part Two, to be faced in Part Three. If you need Malafaxus' profile, refer to Part One. Scores listed there in parentheses are still accurate as the Wurm-Walker is newly reborn. 🐾