

# PLAYERS GUIDE TO

# GAROU™

## A Nation of Wolves

They fight with tooth and claw against an Enemy worse than any nightmare. They struggle amongst themselves, vying to defend a society where the strongest and wisest can lead the War of the Apocalypse. They are bitter rivals and lifelong friends, and above all else they are Garou. Whatever else comes, the werewolves of the Garou Nation will stand as one — or they will fall together.

## The Strength of Tooth and Claw

Looking for those extra options to put the finishing touches on your character? Here they are. **The Players Guide to Garou** is the ultimate resource for building and roleplaying werewolves, from the loyal children of the Garou Nation to the monsters that sniff around its borders. Take your character from cub to legend.

### **Players Guide to Garou** contains:

- An expanded look at Garou society, history and relations with the world around them
- Tons of new Gifts, rites, fetishes, totems, Backgrounds, Abilities and other character creation options
- Expanded rules for Ronin, taint, klaive dueling, Kailindo, mortal characters and more



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# LEGENDS OF THE GAROU

## Untold Stories

Celina rolled over to look at what Gabriel kept on his nightstand. She was feeling a little awkward — one-night stands weren't typically her thing, but she hadn't been able to control herself. Watching Gabriel dance, the way his body swayed, hair dangling about his face, even the odd scars on his arms... simply the most erotic thing she'd ever seen.

The last half-hour was something of a blur to her, but a pleasant one. She remembered feeling something like fear when he'd gotten out of bed to take a shower, but had fought the urge to creep out quietly. Now she busied herself looking around his dingy one-room apartment. It was surprisingly bare; his closet was nearly empty and he didn't have a dresser, just a couple of shelves with what few clothes he apparently owned. No posters on the walls, and the only photo was the one on his nightstand, of him and another man. The man was black, but light skinned, and had dreadlocks down to his chest. Gabriel was smiling in the picture, but the other man just looked angry. Both of them were bare-chested, and Gabriel was waving to the camera. Celina noticed that he didn't have the scars in the picture. He also looked at least two years younger.

Gabriel came out of the bathroom, tousling his hair with a towel. Celina hadn't looked at his body closely

before, but the scars continued over much of it. "There a story behind those?" she asked, reaching up to run a hand down his stomach.

"Not really," he said. He sat on the bed, facing away from her. He seemed almost sad, and she wondered if he was coming down off some kind of high. She began to grow frightened again. Something about him was just so *intense*. It made her uncomfortable.

"You're a great dancer," she said, just to say something.

"Thanks." She heard the smile in his voice. "I used to dance professionally. Ballet troupe out of Sydney."

"I wondered about the accent."

He nodded. "Yeah, Australia. Just got my residency about a month ago."

Another uncomfortable silence. "So," Celina said, and then trailed off, thinking of something to ask him. Her eyes fell on the picture. "Is there a story behind this?"

...

Gabriel stood back as Austin drew himself up to his full (and considerable) height. He asked himself, for what seemed the millionth time, what he'd do if Austin lost control and attacked Emma. Would he intervene? Austin

could probably kill him easily. If he and the others tried to stop Austin, could they hold him long enough for the rage to pass? Did Emma really want them to?

And, for what seemed the millionth time, Austin turned away with a look of desperation on his face. He reached for the chip of bone around his neck and gripped it tightly enough to draw blood. Gabriel silently thanked Gaia that She hadn't gifted him with *that* much Rage, and turned to Emma. The diminutive Ragabash stood with her hands on her hips, ready to fling another goading remark at her pack alpha. Gabriel caught her eye and shook his head. For once, she recognized the wisdom and backed down.

An ear-splitting howl made them all start. Austin was in Glabro form instinctively, and Emma was cocking her rifle just as readily. Gabriel felt, not for the first time, that he was out of the pack's rhythm in such situations — he'd been little help in their first battles.

Aiobheall trotted back down over the hill. The howl, of course, had been hers. Gabriel slumped down to the ground as Austin and Emma relaxed somewhat. He knew what was coming.

"Again," growled Austin, "I'd like to point out that while your neat little deal with Luna might protect *you* somewhat, it also gives away our location to anyone within a mile."

"There's no one within a mile, Austin," piped Emma. "As if you'd know."

Emma didn't answer. Elasia, the pack's Theurge, took the opportunity to jump in. "For what it's worth, Austin, the Umbra's pretty quiet. Anything we'd need to be concerned about would have stirred up the local spirits, don't you think?"

"Oh, I wouldn't know." Austin was clearly disgusted. Aiobheall looked to Gabriel, clearly confused. She still didn't understand sarcasm and bickering. At least now she understood that it wasn't playing; at first she'd knocked Emma down when the arguments started.

"Well, what's the plan, Austin?" It was all Gabriel could think of to say. *Damn it*, he thought, *why do I have lift people's spirits? I'm a bloody dancer, not a comedian!*

It seemed to work, though. Austin stood up and shook his dreadlocks, letting sand spill from them. "If Aiobheall's finished howling for the moment, then here's the plan." He paused to make sure everyone was listening. Aiobheall sat on her haunches, rapt. Emma had taken the barrel off of her rifle and was cleaning it, but looked up and nodded. Elasia leaned against the side of the hill. Gabriel squatted and looked up at the Ahroun expectantly.

"Me and Gabriel will go out near the docks after dark. The fucking Leeches don't come out until then, according to that rat-spirit, right, Elasia?" She nodded, and Austin continued. "Anyway, the guy we're looking for is a blackfella, but darker than me. Word is he always looks spooked, like there's something looking over his shoulder. We're going to buy from him, and then we're going to come to you three."

"And where will we be, O Fearless Leader?" Emma didn't even look at Austin as she spoke, and Gabriel hoped that he wouldn't overreact again. He didn't.

"You'll be at that hotel, the one we scoped last night. The user in the corner room needs to either be dead or passed out; I leave it to you. We'll need the room cleansed before we get there, and then you'll need to check the drugs."

"Drugs are poison?" Aiobheall spoke in the Garou tongue, asking for confirmation.

"Yeah, they are," answered Gabriel.

"Then why check? Why not destroy?"

"Because for one thing," Austin explained (much more patiently than he would have if Emma had asked), "we need to find out where they're making the stuff, especially if it's tainted."

"Besides, if it's Wyrms-drugs rather than just normal drugs, we've got other problems than simple narcotics trade," piped Elasia. Aiobheall lowered her head a bit, signifying that she understood.

"OK, then what?" Emma snapped the barrel back into her rifle.

"If the crap's actually tainted, we'll find the dealer again and make him tell us where it's made. If it's not, we'll find the dealer and just kill him. Either way, it's probably just him to worry about — word on the street is this guy doesn't travel with any backup." Austin spat on the ground. "Which probably makes him dangerous. Any other questions?"

"Yeah," said Emma. *Here it comes*, thought Gabriel. "Why are you taking choirboy and leaving Elasia, Aiobheall, and I to rot at the hotel?"

"Glad you asked." Austin actually grinned. *He's starting to think out his comebacks in advance. Gaia save us all.* "Elasia needs to be at the hotel to perform the Rite of Cleansing. The whole place attracts pussy-ass little Banes, which will fuck up any attempt we make to check if the drugs are tainted, but it makes for a nice, convenient place to hole up. Aiobheall sticks out like a sore thumb in wolf form, and in Homid form she's not much better." It was true, Gabriel reflected. The pack's wolf-born Philodox was strikingly beautiful as a human, and might attract unwanted attention, especially where they were going.

"What about me?" Emma sounded almost eager.

Austin grimaced. "You can't fight worth a shit without your gun, Ragabash, so you're no good to us if you don't carry it. And if you do, it's kind of obvious. It's bigger than you." Gabriel winced. *Harsh, but true*, he thought. Emma was a metis, and was barely four and a half feet in Homid form. She had to switch to Glabro to even fire her rifle without falling over.

Emma stood up and stalked off over the hill. Austin looked at the other four. "We'll meet back here in about two hours. Plenty of time to get to the city by sundown." He nodded towards Emma's footprints. "Somebody tell her, huh?"



Aiobheall walked off, probably to find some shade. She'd been raised in part by imported wolf Kin and in part by her Fianna tribemates, and until her First Change hadn't had any experience in the harsh Australian sun. As a Philodox, she was all right, but her strange *geas* to howl at dawn, midday, sunset, and midnight was beginning to wear on everyone's nerves.

Elasia O'Reilly, obviously not uncomfortable at all in the sun, stripped bare and began spreading suntan lotion over herself. Gabriel looked away, not out of embarrassment, but more to avoid temptation. He knew the Litany, but damn it, that didn't always help. Not that he'd ever voice his attraction to the Theurge. Austin might have been the pack's strongest warrior, but Elasia — Heart-of-Impala to other werewolves — was not to be trifled with.

Austin walked inland, away from the beach. Gabriel watched him go, wishing that he could say something to his friend to quiet the rage and pain he felt. Austin was called Bears-the-Storm-for-the-Dying-Mother by his tribe, and the Uktena foretold dark portents for the young Ahroun's future.

Gabriel Starsmore, though, had yet to earn his name as a warrior for Gaia. Emma suggested Gabriel Twinkle-Toes or Dances-Like-Poof not long after they met. Gabriel backed down from her. He blushed even thinking about it — she was puny and weak no matter the form, and he easily could have dominated her. But he hadn't known that at the time. That was how Emma Sharptongue had become the beta of the Dreamtime's Cry pack.

Gabriel shrugged, and sat down on the sand. He stared dully at the ground. He was looking forward to the foray into the city that night — the pack had fought Banes and even a horrid lobster-like beast in the Outback, but never vampires. The city was his territory, and he was looking forward to telling the tale to the Jindabyne Council later.

Elasia shook him out of his thoughts. "OK, Gabe?"

"Yeah." He looked over at her. She'd turned on her stomach and was looking at him, chin propped on her hands. "Yeah, all right. Just nervous, I guess."

"Yeah, me too. Haven't quite got this Cleansing rite down. Hope I get it right — not like last time."

Gabriel chuckled. It hadn't at all been funny at the time — Elasia's botched attempt at cleansing the lobster-thing's body had called more creatures to the area, and only Austin's fierce rage had saved the pack from serious harm. But Elasia had a good sense of humor about the whole thing, and had candidly admitted her mistake to the Tower Hill sept when they had stopped there to rest. "No worries, Elasia. Just remember which way to walk, right?"

Elasia tossed a pebble at him. "Shove off." She grinned and put her head back down.

Gabriel stood up and wandered over the hill. Looking at Elasia lying naked in the sun for any length of time wasn't good for his mental health. He saw Emma in the

distance, hunkered under some brush, loading a bandolier with rifle shells.

He considered walking over to her, then thought better of it. Emma Sharptongue wasn't the most pleasant of Garou normally, but after Austin's harsh words earlier she'd be in an especially foul mood. Aiobheall had grilled her unmercifully about how dishonorable it was to carry a gun when the pack had first been formed. Gabriel had heard from the Glass Walkers that Emma was only allowed to join to pack in hopes that she would die in battle; in effect, the Cradle Mountain Sept had foisted off the "puny metis" on the Dreamtime's Cry pack. Gabriel couldn't complain; if she'd just reconcile her differences with Austin, she'd be a perfectly adept warrior in her way. Gabriel turned and wandered in the other direction, idly wondering if Elasia couldn't bind a spirit into Emma's gun in order to muffle the shots.

He found Aiobheall between two small hills, head between her paws. She wasn't panting yet, but Gabriel could see she was overheated and thirsty. He didn't bother trying to explain that changing into Homid form would allow her to sweat and cool down somewhat — he knew from experience that it was a fruitless argument. He sat down next to her, wondering what to say.

She rolled over slightly and looked up at him. He always felt awkward around the lupus; he knew that every tiny movement of her body signified something, but didn't always have a good sense of *what* it might mean. Finally, he spoke in the Garou tongue. "How long have you had to howl like that?"

"Since my Rite of Passage," she answered.

"And why do you do it again?"

Aiobheall whined. She was probably sick of having this conversation. "Luna blessed me. I honor her. As long as I honor her, she protects me."

"What from?" Aiobheall had been pretty badly injured in the pack's first fight, against a pack of vicious spider-like Banes.

"Don't know. But I trust her." Gabriel had nothing to say to that. Talking with lupus werewolves was a little like talking with mentally handicapped folks, as far as he was concerned. It made him uncomfortable. He felt as though he should talk down to them, but didn't want to seem condescending.

Fortunately, Aiobheall didn't seem to mind if there was no conversation. She rolled over and closed her eyes, probably resting for the evening's work. She hadn't been part of the pack originally, Gabriel recalled. The Jindabyne Council had allowed her to join after a heated debate — the Silver Fangs had wanted one of their tribe in the newest Australian pack, but there hadn't been a young half-moon available. Finally, some sort of agreement had been reached that allowed Aiobheall to join, even thought that meant two Fianna in the pack. Gabriel couldn't care less, but then, his tribe stayed fairly neutral in such matters.

His gaze wandered to the top of the hill and he saw Austin with his arms stretched to the sky. He seemed so simplistic, but Gabriel felt that the pack's alpha was deeper than he let on. Austin was reluctant to talk about himself — Gabriel didn't even know how he'd earned his impressive name. "Bears-the-Storm-for-the-Dying-Mother"... what had Austin endured to gain that title?

Sunset finally approached, and the pack climbed into the jeep leant to them by Elasia's home sept. They drove into the city, Gabriel behind the wheel (Austin had wanted to drive, but Emma had a few choice things to say about "road rage" and finally the Ahroun relented). He dropped the three female members of the pack at the dingy motel, and watched as Emma opened the door. Gabriel smiled as he noted the nervous-yet-resolute look on Elasia's face, and silently encouraged her. Austin climbed into the front seat and the two of them headed for the wharves.

Gabriel glanced at his packmate. "Nervous?"

Austin shook his head, face set in a grim frown. "Nah."

"You look worried."

"I am. But I'm not nervous."

"What's going on?"

Austin shrugged. "Bad feeling, I guess. Impala came to see me this afternoon." Impala was the pack's totem, and she was normally reticent, only showing up if one of the pack asked. "Asked if we were all right, and if Aiobheall had done her howls today." He spat out the window. "She did the sunset howl, yeah?"

"Oh, sure. I made sure she howled before we got too close to the city. It was when you went off to piss."

"Oh, right." Austin opened his mouth as if to say something else, but then closed it. Gabriel switched on the radio. He knew better than to dig deeper. For Austin, that had been a long conversation.

The streets began to grow crowded as they approached the wharves. Tourists, sailors, and hookers crossed in front of them. Finally, Gabriel parked the jeep and the two of them continued on towards the wharves.

The Curse had been a hard adjustment for Gabriel, but walking with Austin was a truly sobering experience. *Everyone* gave him a wide berth. No prostitutes approached him, and dealers and junkies slid quietly into the alleys when they walked by. Tourists stared, and Gabriel heard them whispering about "that freaky black guy." Compared to Austin, thought Gabriel, *I might as well not even be Garou.*

Austin fixed his eyes firmly ahead. Gabriel knew he was trying not to get angry. The Galliard looked up and saw the half-moon rising; Aiobheall was probably going to be a handful tonight, which might have been another reason that Austin left her at the hotel. Shaking off these thoughts, Gabriel tried to recall what he'd been taught about vampires.

Most Garou called them "Leeches." He knew they drank blood, and supposedly one vampire could be as strong

as a werewolf in Crinos form. Gabriel found that hard to believe. He wondered if they suffered from the Delirium or the Curse; probably not. That might make their target easier to identify, and he leaned close to Austin told him so in the Garou tongue.

"Good thinking," he growled back. Gabriel smiled — any chance to shine was welcome. Gaia knew he needed it. It wasn't about the renown, either, although he wouldn't mind earning a name and being asked to speak — or dance — at moots more often. He smiled a bit more widely as he thought of dancing at a moot, though of course he'd need to modify his style somewhat; werewolves weren't really a ballet crowd.

A piercing whistle caught his attention. He and Austin looked right and saw six men, all early twenties, all obviously street toughs, playing basketball. The one holding the ball, a black man, shirtless and muscular, nodded at them. "You guys want to play? We need a couple more."

Gabriel frowned. There was something very wrong with this guy, but he couldn't put his finger on it. Austin yelled back, "Yeah, all right." On the way across the street, he spoke in Garou, briefly and quietly. "That's our guy."

Gabriel cocked his head, trying to figure out how Austin had known. The guy didn't look abnormal in any way that he could sense, just seemed "off" for some reason. Gabriel started to answer, then noticed the man staring at the two werewolves a bit too intently, as if he could hear them. Suppose vampires could heighten their senses the way Aiobheall could? Gabriel decided not to chance it. He reached out to Austin's mind and felt the soft, dream-like state take them both. They wouldn't be able to play basketball with the Gift active, but just for a moment, it wouldn't hurt.

*How do you know?*

*Look at him.* Austin's thoughts were like black thunder and blood-red lightning. *All his guys are sweating. Why isn't he?*

Gabriel looked and saw that Austin was right. All the other toughs were drenched in sweat — the night was hot and the concrete was still bleeding off the heat from the sun. But the lead guy was completely dry, and didn't look at all out of breath. *Shit*, Gabriel thought.

*Don't worry about it. We're just going to play some ball and then go off and talk to him.*

With that, Gabriel closed the link. He and Austin shed their shirts and joined the game. Gabriel had never liked basketball. Really, he didn't like sports in general, preferring the controlled environment of ballet. Harder to get hurt, and no driving need to win over someone. But Austin, he could see, was just as intense as usual. Every time he got the ball, he drove straight to the basket. After a few points, Gabriel figured out what he was doing. He was testing to see if the players moved out of his way instinctively. Every one of them did — except for the black guy, who hadn't stopped grinning since the game began. He wasn't bothered by the