

BASTARD BREED



A ROLEPLAYING GAME OF TWISTED WEREWOLF FAMILIES

BY PADDY HUTCHINSON

CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

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ANCESTRY
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UNOFFICIAL CREDITS TRACK
AUGIE MARCH'S LUPUS

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You thought you were safe here, you and your pack. But someone fucked up, and now you're all in danger, the trap closing even as we breathe, kill and howl.

It's three nights until Magdalene pups. The rites must be met. It was named that this should be the place. We cannot run until the newborns are safely delivered.

This was home. The people here were friends, or as close as sheep could be to friends. You had trusted them, but any one of them could be your betrayer. The hunters are coming.

The rites must be met.

We cannot run.

We must protect our own.

Welcome to Bastard Breed.

In this game your group takes on the roles of a pack of werewolves, living on the borderlands of a small town. Though you live as humans in the town, and have made friends among the townsfolk, you have not forgotten the old ways of your people, and still hunt the wild places in your true skin beneath the light of the moon.

You had settled into your Lair to perform the ceremonies to welcome Magdalene's litter into the world, but a gang of stalkers with more zeal than sense found you there. The bastards are dead now, but you know more are coming.

You are werewolves. In your human form you enjoy the heightened senses of your animal body, as well as a measure of its lupine stamina. You are fiercely strong, and even in human form your bite can cause horrible injuries. You may become a wolf at will, and must do so under the light of the full moon or when driven to go Berserk.

That's the basics. Now lets find out what happened.

BLOODLINES

Like most of us, *Bastard Breed* did not spring into life unprompted.

The creation of this game was heavily influenced by a number of other media, including most notably the TV series *True Blood*, the film *Dog Soldiers*, Dessa's album *A Badly Broken Code* and a number of roleplaying games, foremost Steve Hickey's *Soth*, Magpie Games' *Undying* and Onyx Path's *Werewolf: The Forsaken*.

In the latter case, I wanted to take the themes of Werewolf that resonated most strongly with me, and bring them into sharper focus; the themes of family, divided loyalty and the fraught power structures that throw chaos into the lives of outsider communities. Throw in a strong dash of Dale Dickey's haunting performance as True Blood's werewolf matriarch, and we're getting at the real marrow.

But if we want bone, the main ancestor for the structure of this game is most definitely *Soth*.

SO+H

It was probably *Vampire the Masquerade* that first got us roleplaying the monster in the modern sense, but *Soth* is among the first to expand that monstrosity to malignant Lovecraftian cultists.

In *Soth*, the player party's goal is to summon their ancient, sleeping God Soth into the world. In the process, they will deceive friends and family, dodge the attention of investigators and law enforcement, and sacrifice human beings to satisfy the cult's bloody rites. It is, quite literally, a game about getting away with murder, and if the cultists don't fear the cops, then they should most certainly fear each other.

It is from *Soth* that *Bastard Breed* draws its Heat mechanic, giving a sense of attention and consequences for the crimes committed. The town creation and ritualised Pack Roles were also strongly influenced by Hickey's creation, though the latter was expanded significantly. Major shifts from the original include the implementation of a GMless, act based structure and a more nebulous, consensus based system of stalker behaviour.

So if you're into interesting developments in roleplaying games, or just have some catharsis for unsatisfied Machiavellian tendencies, you can find Soth on Payhip or Drivethrurpg.

**BUT THAT WAS THE PAST, SCREAMED INTO
THE WIND OR SCARRED DEEPLY INTO THE
BONES OF YOUR ANCESTORS.**

TODAY IS YOURS.

YOUR PLACE

Shuffle the roles and give them out at random, or distribute them by consensus. You will need at least three players, but four or more is better. Take a number of roles equal to your players, in the following order: Alpha, Midwife, Hunter, Hunter, Cub, Scout, and Hunters from there.

Each card contains important ritual phrases, marked in italics, to reflect power dynamics. To deploy these dynamics, simply say that is what you are doing. The receiving player will have instructions on their card.

THE ALPHA

The pack follows you, and their collective survival is your responsibility.

When you *command* one of your pack to act, they must obey your command or *challenge* you for Alpha. Heed your Scout's *advice*, but if they deceive you, you may *cast them out* as a Pariah and elect a new Scout.

If there is a Cub, they may ask you if they *did well* regarding certain actions. Answer truthfully, as their leader.

When the Midwife *goads* you, you must obey or forfeit the position of Alpha, returning to either Hunter or, at your choice, Pariah. Another will attempt to fill your role.

The Alpha draws power from fear and violence. If they not obeyed absolutely, their subordinates are in revolt. Be careful how hard you drive your pack.

THE MIDWIFE

You are the keeper of the rites, and it is your duty to ensure the safe delivery of Magdalene's cubs.

You receive the Midwife's Rites card. If you die without passing this ancient knowledge on, initiating another into the role of Midwife, then it is a great tragedy for the pack and the source of terrible lamentations. You may pass the rites on at any time to a willing packmate, taking for yourself the role of Hunter.

If you *goad* the Alpha to action in the name of the pack, they must obey or you may strip them of leadership as the ancient laws dictate. Do not do this lightly. The Midwife cannot be Alpha.

If a packmate *begs* your help, the first time you must assist them unless it would betray your sacred role. From the second time, you may choose to help, or cast the weakling out as a Pariah.

The Midwife draws power from obligation and respect, but is also bound by these. Beware your many responsibilities.

THE HUNTER

You are a Hunter of the werewolf pack.

When your Alpha *commands* you, you must obey or else *challenge* them for the role of Alpha.

You may *beg* the assistance of the Midwife, but this is risky. They have power, but don't push your luck.

If there is a Cub, they should *do what you say*.

Hunt, kill, defend your own. This is your place, and it is beautiful.

The Hunters draw power from compromise and ambition, with their leaders authority limited by their patience. Be ready to gauge when your rebellion is warranted.

THE SCOUT

You are the Scout of the werewolf pack, the one trusted to range furthest afield and report back.

When your Alpha *commands* you, you must obey, *challenge* them for the role of Alpha, or *advise* an alternative based on your intel. Truth or lies, your call, but beware *deceiving* your Alpha.

If there is a Cub, they should *do what you say*. They may ask if they *did well* regarding certain actions; answer truthfully, as their role model.

You may *beg* the assistance of the Midwife, but this is risky. They have power, but don't push your luck.

The Scout draws their power from trust and knowledge. With the luxury of questioning your leader's orders, you must decide how to engage with that trust.

THE CUB

You are the newest member of the pack, which is trying and challenging. They are waiting for you to prove yourself.

Until that happens, you have to *do what they say*, grudgingly or otherwise. If your Alpha *commands* you, snap to it. Better to try and to fail than to disobey.

If you take a big risk, and it pays off, ask either the Alpha or the Scout whether you *did well*. If they answer in the affirmative, you become a Hunter. Until then, you cannot be *cast out*.

The Cub draws their power from naivety and enthusiasm. There is a lot you can get away with, but the trade-off is a lack of direct power.

THE PARIAH

Nobody begins play as a Pariah, but you have been *cast out* of your pack for some error that you made.

You may act outside the pack's protection as long as you wish, but you will be very vulnerable to the Stalkers.

If you return in fury, you may *challenge* the Alpha. If you win, you become Alpha and may elect a new Scout if that role is in play.

If you return in supplication, the Alpha may allow your return on probation, having offered some compromise or service.

If you do not wish to return, you may leave the pack to their fate, and your character leaves play. Add your voice to those of the Stalkers, and see how this ends.

The Pariah exists outside of the pack's power structure and protection. You may choose whether you aid them from afar, try to return or leave them. They drove you out, after all.

THE CHALLENGE

Werewolves are savage creatures, beholden to a brutal pecking order. If the Alpha gives one of their pack an order that they do not wish to carry out, they have a choice; they may obey or challenge their leader for power over the pack.

If a challenge occurs, have each contestant take a moment to frame the scene, then each secretly bids a number of Wolf Stones they are willing to draw. Whoever bids higher becomes the new Alpha, with the old Alpha moving to Hunter or Pariah at their option.

If one or both of the contestants bids enough to go Berserk, the higher bidder still wins, and then follow the usual rules for going Berserk.

The new Alpha may elect a new Scout if that role is in play. Otherwise, all other players maintain their current roles.

BERSERK

You were not meant for this civilized world.

When you have collected five Wolf Stones, return them to the bowl. Each packmate should write the name of a towns person on a slip of paper, and drops it into the stones. Draw one at random.

Your character comes to shortly after their rampage, having murdered the towns person whose name was drawn. Frame the next scene with that fallout in mind, and add 2 Heat for the killing.

YOUR SELF

Each player takes a card and fills in the details of their packmate.

Write your character's **Name**, by which they are known to the townsfolk and the wider world.

Have the player on your left select your **Secret Name**, the name by which you are called when alone with your packmates. They are usually short and conceptual, direct translations from the tongue of wolves.

Choose a **Quirk**, some visual or behavioural tic that makes your character unique.

Select an **Obligation** that ties you to the townsfolk, and have the player on your right give it a **Face** - the person that best embodies that Obligation in your life.

Select some **Unfinished Business** that you wish to resolve before you flee the town, and have the player on your left give it a **Face**; the focus of that desire, or perhaps its clearest opposition.

It BEGINS

Fill in a sheet for each character, and take your Roles.

Prepare a small bowl full of Wolf Stones in the centre of the space, where they can easily be drawn or returned by all players.

As you were decorating your Lair for the final rites that would welcome Magdalene's litter, an isolated cell of Stalkers from the town that had been trying to track your presence found you. They were fools, and didn't realise how fast the change could take you. You tore them apart.

Alpha, name who brought down the final attacker. You may not name the Midwife, but you may name yourself. That pack member draws a Wolf Stone, and must answer the following questions.

What was the last thing the Stalker said when they recognised you?

Who were they?

Were they your friend, or your lover?

Take some time to resolve the scene as the pack decides what to do with the bodies, whether they need to reinforce the lair, or who the hell slipped up that led these bastards to their door. The scene ends once the pack has a decent idea what they're going to do about it.

Then it's time to answer some questions.

WHERE ARE WE?

The pack chooses one of the following small towns:

- Bridgewater (old fashioned fishing town, popular for holidaymakers)
- Falkirk (historic mountain town prone to heavy snows)
- Willowood (riverside farming community, a long way from anywhere)
- Cooper's Ridge (a disintegrating former mining town full of hard, tired people)

Write the name in the middle of a big sheet of paper in the middle, and write your pack's names around it. It's handy if it follows your order of seating. Draw Magdalene and the Lair a safe distance from town, and write the Face of each character's Obligation and Unfinished Business near that character.

Now more questions, to help you map out the town.

Ask the Alpha

Which powerful person in town is afraid of you? Give them a name, a station, and draw a line from yours labelled "Fear".

Who can't you let go? Why? Give them a name, and a line from yours.

Who scares you? Why? Give them a name, and a line from yours.

Ask the Midwife

Who in town gives solid advice? Give them a name, a station, and draw a line from your name marked "Wisdom".

Who in town knows far more than is good for them? Give them a name, a quick note of what they know and mark the line "Knows Too Much".

Who is the father of Magdalene's litter? Select a character, either a pack member or a townsman. Draw a line from them to Magdalene.

Ask the Scout (If present)

Someone knows what you are, and they know you know. How did they find out? Why didn't you kill them? Give them a name, and write "Leak" on the line.

Who have you fallen in love with? Give them a name, and write "Love" on the line.

Ask the Cub (If present)

Who from your old, human family still lives here? Give them a name, and write your relationship on the line.

Who was your Vector? Which packmate brought you into this savage new life? Write a relationship of your choice between you.

Ask the Hunters, in turn.

Who is a useful ally? Write "Useful" on the line.

Who is a pain in the arse? Write "Jerk" on the line.

Who wants in on the pack? Write "Poser(?)" on the line.

Who has to go? Select a previously named character, and write "Trouble" on your line.

Who do you owe a huge favour? Select a previously named character, write "Debt" on your line.

Wait... they know each other? Have each hunter draw a line from one townsman to another, and write a quick summary of their relationship on the line.

Place the dead Stalkers on the chart, connected to at least two other characters.

And so it begins. Cut back to the Lair for a brief recap, then begin the Cycle.

THE CYCLE

Once the pack has a basic idea of how they are going to handle this alarming new development, its times to start treading through the Cycle.

There are going to be three of these, one for each day before the birth, each with three scenes - Day, Night, and Madrugada - in each. Each player takes a turn framing their scene, and other pack members should take the roles of townsfolk as necessary.

The Midwife has distinct objectives that they must fulfill to meet the needs of the birth rites, but pack members must also try and fulfill their obligation to avoid suspicion, while also going after their Unfinished Business.

The player sets the scene with what they intend to achieve with it, and play continues from there with the other players playing incidental parts and describing the kinds of opposition that might surface. Whether the character succeeds or not is less relevant than how they went about their actions.

If there is Pain on the table, at any time a Player may choose to own it, incorporating it into their scene and themselves, narratively taking one for the pack. All Pain must be taken by someone by the end of the Cycle, so don't sell out your packmates.

At the end of the scene, take a vote from the pack as to whether the player's actions were those of a Human or a Wolf. If they acted as a Wolf, take 1 extra Heat. If they acted as a Human, draw a Wolf Stone.

After the vote, decide how much Heat the scene generated.

The wolves attract 1 Heat in a scene just by existing; they're being hunted.

+1 if there was violence or fray

+1 if they were caught in a lie

+2 if anyone dies

+1 if their wolf form was seen by the townsfolk

+3 if they were seen transforming

+1 if they left passing evidence of their nature; bite wounds, prints, howls in the town centre.

+3 if they do something inhuman in front of witnesses; tear off a car door, shrug off non-silver bullet wounds.

+2 if they were unable to meet their obligation that day.

This Heat goes into a communal pool that will come into play at the end each day of the Cycle, but at any time if a pack member manages to corner a pursuer, they may elect to be injured or killed (if already injured), absorbing 3 and 5 Heat from the pool respectively.

After each pack member has had their scene for the day, the Cycle completes and we have the Stalker phase.

THE STALKER PHASE

At the end of each day cycle, the pack takes the role of the Stalkers pursuing them, and work together to decide how Heat is spent. You need not spend all the Heat in any cycle **except** the final one, but forgoing the inevitable tends to lead to a very bloody denouement.

To spend Heat, select one of the items from the following list, write them, and leave them on the table as Pain. Selecting one of these is a guarantee that they will appear in the next Cycle, so get consensus. The Stalkers, unlike the Pack, are a democracy.

If you think of an interesting idea that isn't listed, work together to think how much Heat it would be worth and play it like any other Pain.

2 Heat - The Stalkers have been shadowing a packmate.

3 Heat - A packmate is injured, slowing them down. A concussion or a broken wrist.

4 Heat - The Stalkers buy out one of the townsfolk, turning their allegiance.

6 Heat - A packmate is severely injured, near crippled. Blinded, deafened or a broken leg.

6 Heat - The Stalkers turn a scene into an ambush.

8 Heat - A packmate is killed.

10 Heat - The Stalkers have found the Lair, and can now attack it directly.

DENOUEMENT

After the three cycles are complete, we have one final scene to resolve. If she has been protected so far, Magdalene will have had her pups, and it is time for the pack to make a break for it. Now is the time that any more Heat and Pain must be resolved. Narrate together your escape plan, and play out that one final scene as you run the gauntlet the Stalkers have set for you.

To conclude, each player narrates a short scene of where the pack's roads take them. Those who survived may each name one of the pups, and the one piece of advice that they pass on to them. Those who died speak last, and decide whether those words will, in the future, save the pup or damn them.

SUCCEED OR FAIL?

Unlike many roleplaying games, Bastard Breed does not contain a fixed system to determine whether individual packmate's actions have succeeded or failed.

This is deliberate. The success of a packmate's actions is less significant than the means they used in the process; whether they were more human or wolf, and how much Heat they were willing to expose themselves to.

If dealing with primarily inanimate opposition, exercise common sense. Werewolves are by nature hale and physically competent, so overcoming a physical obstacle is generally only a matter of time.

When opposed by townsfolk the same rule applies, though if it feels like the packmate's goal is incompatible it is better to offer a compromise or a quid pro quo than a flat refusal. The townsfolk will have their own wants and needs, and may be willing to trade a favour to help packmates with their Unfinished Business.

Failing that, threats and overt savagery can be a shortcut, if one is willing to accept the Heat.

THE CUB

You are the newest member of the pack, which is trying and challenging. They are waiting for you to prove yourself.

Until that happens, you have to *do what they say*, grudgingly or otherwise. If your Alpha *commands* you, snap to it. Better to try and to fail than to disobey.

If you take a big risk, and it pays off, ask either the Alpha or the Scout whether you *did well*. If they answer in the affirmative, you become a Hunter.

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If there is a Cub, they should *do what you say*. They may ask if they *did well* regarding certain actions; answer truthfully, as their role model.

You may *beg* the assistance of the Midwife, but this is risky. They have power, but don't push your luck.

THE MIDWIFE

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You receive the Midwife's Rites card. If you die without passing this ancient knowledge on, giving someone else the role of Midwife and becoming a Hunter, then it is a great tragedy for the pack and the source of terrible lamentations.

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THE PARIAH

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You may act outside the pack's protection as long as you wish, but you will be very vulnerable to the Stalkers.

If you return in fury, you may *challenge* the Alpha. If you win, you become Alpha and may elect a new Scout.

If you return in supplication, the Alpha may allow your return on probation, if the Alpha accepts your compromise or service.

If you do not wish to return, you may leave the pack to their fate, and your character leaves play. Add your voice to those of the Stalkers, and see how this ends.

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THE HUNTER

You are a Hunter of the werewolf pack.

When your Alpha *commands* you, you must obey or else *challenge* them for the role of Alpha.

You may *beg* the assistance of the Midwife, but this is risky. They have power, but don't push your luck.

If there is a Cub, they should *do what you say*.

Hunt, kill, defend your own. This is your place, and it is beautiful.

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THE CHALLENGE

If a challenge occurs, have each contestant take a moment to frame the scene, then each contestant secretly bids a number of Wolf Stones they are willing to draw. Whoever bids higher becomes the new Alpha, with the old Alpha moving to Hunter or Pariah at their option. Each then draws the number they bid.

If one or both of the contestants bids enough to go Berserk, the higher bidder still wins, and then follow the usual rules for going Berserk for both.

The new Alpha may elect a new Scout if that role is in play. Otherwise, all other players maintain their current roles.

BERSERK

When you have collected five Wolf Stones, return them to the bowl. Each packmate should write the name of a townsperson on a slip of paper, and drops it into the stones. Draw one at random.

Your character comes to shortly after their rampage, having murdered the townsperson whose name was drawn. Frame the next scene with that fallout in mind, and add 2 Heat for the killing.

MIDWIFE RITES

These are your rites for a birth, passed down in the voices of your kin or in the scars on the bones of your ancestors.

On the second night prior, which you will know by the distant voice of the Moon, the Mother must be gifted with the meat of many kills. The aftermath matters not, but the feast must be readied before the moon is at its zenith.

On the last night prior, which you will know by the crackling of the Storm over your pelt, anoint the Mother's brow with the blood of the true ruler of the land. Wilful or not, their laws are not ours.

On the night of the birth, you and your Alpha must be present, and the Moon's Song played on a flute of human bone. Give the cubs their secret names, to hide in their hearts that they may never be stolen.

From there, the cubs lives are their own, and they must learn their own rites.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Distribute Role Cards

Fill Out a Self Card for each player

Play out It Begins

Answer the Questions in Where are We?

Begin the Cycle

Each Day has three Times: Day, Night and Madrugada

Each player frames a scene for each Time.

Play out the scene with the remaining players taking the role of any townsfolk or relevant packmates. After the scenes dramatic point is resolved, vote: Was the Packmate more like a Wolf (+1 Heat) or a Human (+1 Wolf Stone).

Resolve Heat.

Once each player has resolved their three scenes, move to the Stalker phase, and convert Heat to Pain.

Repeat for the Second and Third Day.

Run the Denouement, and resolve any remaining Pain. The player of each living packmate names a pup and gives them a piece of advice. The player of each dead packmate decided whether said advice will save them or damn them.

Heat

The wolves attract 1 Heat in a scene just by existing; they're being hunted.
+1 if there was violence or fray
+1 if they were caught in a lie
+2 if anyone dies
+1 if their wolf form was seen by the townsfolk
+2 if they were seen transforming
+1 if they left passing evidence of their nature; bite wounds, prints, howls in the town centre.
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Pain

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