THE HOUR BETWEEN

DOG

AND

WOLF

IN THE GRIP OF FEAR: GÊVAUDAN, 1764

"The grim wolf stalked across the land, a form of death, invulnerable himself, and all his trail was red with human blood." Seton (1937)

It was The Year of Our Lord 1764 when the creature that came to be called The Beast first appeared in those lands in the south of France. In time it would kill over a hundred souls and would require King Louis XV to mount no fewer than three offensives against it. The first of these was led by one Captain Duhamel, an officer in the French army, who with two companies of dragoons arrived in Gêvaudan in August of that year.

Popular opinion was that The Beast was a wolf of incredible size and strength, perhaps even a werewolf. Testimony from witnesses suggested otherwise, but hysteria succeeded in vilifying the forest animals. Before he would finish, Duhamel would organize dozens of battues – literally, "beatings" of the bush – that would lead to the slaughter of hundreds of wolves. Their carcasses were paraded about Mende and then later buried at the city gates to ward off other beasts, but the deaths didn't stop, and Duhamel was relieved of his duty in April of 1765 having never achieved his goal.

This game takes place in that span of time, between Duhamel's heralded arrival and his departure in disgrace.

BEFORE YOU PLAY

The Hour Between Dog And Wolf is meant to be enjoyed by a group. It can be played with no fewer than three players. One player must always assume the role of Games Master (GM).

To play you will need some paper and pencils and a handful of six-sided dice. A bottle of wine, preferably from the Languedoc region, is recommended as well, both for the practical effect of inflaming one's passion, as well as to set a properly French mood. Enjoy!

YOUR WOLF

In **The Hour Between Dog And Wolf**, you'll get to play one of the beleaguered wolves of Gévaudan. For this game, one wolf is pretty much like another. Oh, they might differ in appearance and temperament, but when it comes to getting things done, they all have the same basic competency. There isn't really any character creation, so this chapter will explain the essentials.

Basic Wolfishness

All wolves have the same basic physical and mental capabilities. They're athletic and strong, able to run for long periods of time, make astounding leaps, swim short distances, and even climb with some proficiency. Their senses – particularly smell, and to an only slightly lesser degree, hearing – are astonishing. They are among the world's most efficient predators, possessing power, patience, and the ability to strategize. Finally, they are social creatures, not because they need to be, but because they want to be; they have the capacity to bond and form emotional attachments, sometimes even outside their species.

When facing conflicts within the game, you'll roll five dice for your wolf. A cool thing to do is to decide what your wolf's coloration is – gray, white, black, brown, red, etc. – and use dice of those colors.

La Béte

Your wolf starts with one trait on his character sheet: *La Béte* ("The Beast"). La Béte doesn't measure any physical quality; rather, it reflects the perception the people of Gêvaudan have of you. They believe you to be The Beast. They fear you, and those who don't fear hate you and would gladly see you dead.

La Béte starts at five dice and will fluctuate throughout the game. These dice should be distinct from your other dice in some way. You roll your La Béte dice whenever you roll any dice; you can use these to your advantage, capitalizing on the irrational fear people have of you and your kind, but to overdo it is to risk even greater persecution later.

Companions

As you play the game, you will develop relationships with human characters – they become your *companions*. By proving your gentle nature to humans you will soften their fear, and in return, they will help shield you from the persecution of Captain Duhamel's battues. Sadly, this is sometimes a double-edged sword for the humans, because without fear, they become easy targets for the real La Bete.

Companions are kept track of on a communal list – a companion to one of you is a companion to all. A companion is a companion as soon as his name is writ upon the list, which can only be done by facing conflict while resisting the urge to use your La Béte. Once

named, a companion can then earn a rating, and it's this numerical score which benefits you most, reducing the total number of dice the GM rolls when checking Duhamel's Battues. It does have a downside though; when sharing a scene with a companion, your La Béte score is reduced by an amount equal to its rating.

PLAYING THE GAME

Scenes

Players take turns calling for scenes. They can specify the characters they want to have scenes with. The GM then creates the scene, placing the requested characters in a location and involving them in some kind of conflict, perhaps with other characters, but taking care not to introduce the wolf into the scene, or any companions that were not requested.

It's the player's option as to when and how his wolf will become involved in a scene. The player can opt not to have his wolf enter the scene at all, in which case the GM would narrate the entire scene from open to close and move on to the next player. A player introduces his wolf into the scene by rolling his dice (five + La Béte) and describing its entrance. Remember that your wolf's La Béte score is reduced by an amount equal to the total score of the companions it shares the scene with.

When a wolf enters a scene, it is automatically considered to be taking the side of its companions in whatever conflict is present. That's where its loyalty lies. If every character is a companion, the player has to decide whose side to come down on. If there are non-companion characters in the scene, they will stop whatever they are doing to engage the wolf and try to drive it away; this becomes the conflict for the scene. The GM rolls his dice (five + Hardship), and the conflict resolution rules kick in.

If, after the conflict has played out, the player avoided using any of his wolf's La Béte dice, he can add one point to an existing companion (who must be present in the scene), or inscribe the name of a new character onto the list of companions (again, the character must be present in the scene). If the player used all of his La Béte dice, he must reduce the value of one Companion (who must be present in the scene) by one, or select a character from the scene to become a Mortal Enemy.

If the wolf lost the conflict, it is driven from the scene and the GM closes it out. If it wins the conflict, all non-companion characters are driven from the scene and the player closes it out.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution begins as soon as your wolf enters a scene. You roll your dice (five + your La Béte score) and the GM rolls his (five + one for each point of Hardship your wolf has). Keep your rolls hidden from each other.

The person that rolled the most dice starts off as the *aggressor*, and the other is the *defender*. The rule of thumb is that you attack with one die and defend with two, so the aggressor begins by revealing one die. The defender must match or exceed the total on the aggressor's die with no more than two of his own dice. If it takes both of his dice to match the aggressor's die, he is said to have successfully defended and play returns to the aggressor, who again has an opportunity to reveal a die. If, however, the defender can match the aggressor's die with a single die of his own, he is said to have seized the advantage; he now becomes the aggressor and may use his second die to attack his opponent.

Note that you never *have* to reveal dice, even when it's your turn to do so. If you're the aggressor and you choose not to reveal a die, your opponent becomes the aggressor and you become the defender. If you're the defender and you choose not to defend against the aggressor by not revealing any dice, you concede the conflict to him.

The player always has an option not available to the GM: At any time that he is the defender, a player may voluntarily take a point of Hardship upon his wolf and force the aggressor to discard a just revealed die. The aggressor remains the aggressor, but he must now choose a new die to reveal.

When revealing dice, it is important to remember that the dice represent the actions of your wolf and his opponent. Every time a die is revealed, a colorful declaration should accompany it. This is where the majority of the roleplaying occurs!

Play continues like this until one player can not, or will not, defend himself. At that point, the conflict resolves in favor of the aggressor.

Pack Tactics

Wolves function better together than they do apart. When things get rough, you can band together and help each other out.

Any player who hasn't had a scene since the last Battue can forego his turn this round and join an ongoing scene. He can do this even in mid-conflict, announcing his entrance into the scene like he would any other time. For the purposes of conflict resolution, he rolls his dice separately, but all players can see each others rolls and can pull dice from any pool for attack or defense purposes. When a die gets revealed from a particular pool, it's that player who roleplays the action attached to it.

Only one player gets to roll La Bete in a given scene, and it's shared between all wolves in the scene. The GM gets to roll a die for all the Hardship belonging to all the wolves in a scene, and if a wolf enters the scene mid-conflict, he gets to roll its Hardship immediately.

Players should note that crowding all their wolves into one or two scenes per round will ensure they win conflicts, but fewer scenes means fewer opportunities to interact with companions, which ultimately leads to harsher Battues down the road.

Mortal Enemies

Mortal Enemies are characters who so hate wolves that they become especially dangerous when sharing scenes with them. They always get one extra dice when facing a wolf – any wolf - in conflict.

Duhamel's Battues

At the end of each round of scenes the GM must roll for Duhamel's Battue ("beating"). This is an in-game event where the GM determines if any of the wolves have become victims of the constant persecution surrounding their kind in Gêvaudan, 1765. The GM rolls dice equal to their combined La Béte scores, minus the total scores of the all companions they had scenes with in the just-finished round. Every six he rolls is a point of Hardship; the players can decide as a group how to divvy up the Hardship.

Hardship can represent actual wounds suffered while being hunted, encroaching starvation, or whatever the player wants. They should describe it for all to hear.

Hardship has a couple effects on the game. The first is that each point of Hardship inflicted on a given wolf gives the GM an extra die to roll in conflicts with that wolf. The second is that at the end of each game session, each player must roll all of his wolf's Hardship dice, and if any of them come up sixes, their wolf has perished.

The Beast

The Beast is a terrifying creature, not unlike a cross between a hyena and a wild boar. Its thick skin is impenetrable, its claws and teeth are like swords, and its senses and intellect are as canny as any wolf's. For all intents and purposes, it is invincible.

Once per game, the GM can introduce The Beast into a scene in much the same way a player can his wolf. Whatever has been happening in the scene up to this point stops and all conflict focuses on The Beast. Instead of five dice, the GM rolls ten for this scene, plus any Hardship the wolf possesses. If the wolf loses the conflict it is driven away as normal and The Beast goes on to slaughter every human in the scene.

Saying Farewell

At some point, you might decide that a particular companion has served you well and decide to free them from their obligation before you get them killed. Tell the GM you are doing so, and then erase the companion from the list. You get to narrate a final scene with this character, without interruption from the GM or other players, and when you're done, that character can no longer be mentioned by anyone while a session is in progress.

You can do this at any time during a session. It takes the place of your normal turn.
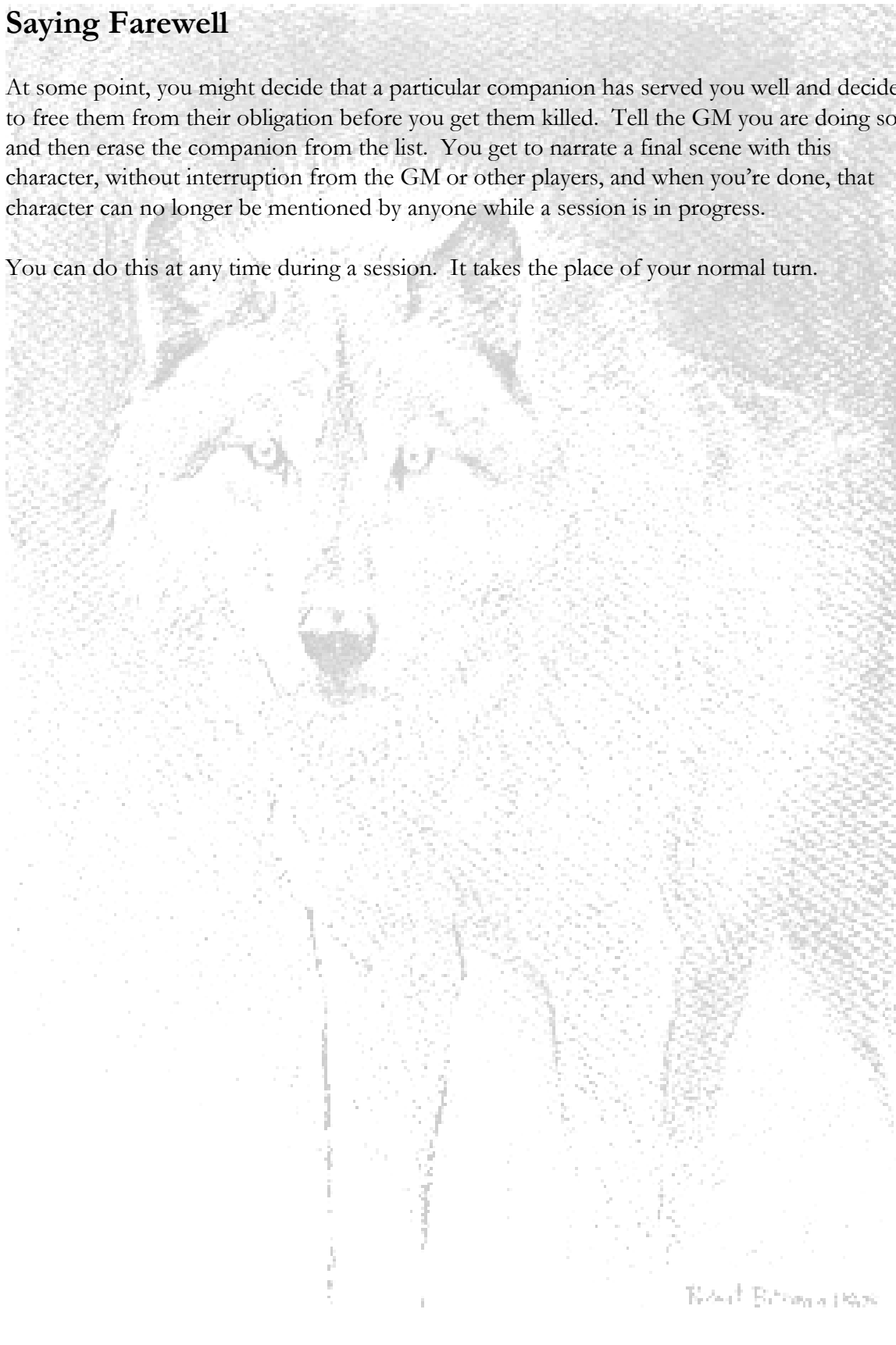
AFTERWORD:
THIS IS WHAT I MEANT

Okay, so this was much closer to a 24 Hour rpg than a Game Chef entry. Much of my inspiration came to me on the eve of the deadline…I had at least three major breakthroughs after midnight, and it's now 5:00 AM on Sunday and I'm just finishing up. I think the text is reflective of that; there's a lot I wish I could have done, particularly with setting details. That said, I'm happy with what I have.

This is supposed to be a game about making friends, and being friends, and eventually having to say goodbye. I hope it works. I hope that the plight of the wolves proves too dire, and that when the players realize their fate, they'll look to their companions and set them free. I want it to be sad and great, in that *Old Yeller* sort of way. If I knew for sure it worked this last paragraph wouldn't be necessary, but until I get a chance to playtest it, it stays.

On the inspiration side of things, I have to give thanks to Paul Czege and Vincent Baker; I'm sure you can see **My Life With Master** and **Dogs In The Vineyard** in this. In the beginning **Primetime Adventures** was an influence, and although I think I veered away from that, Matt Wilson still deserves his props. I'm sure there are others, I'm sorry if I've forgotten you.

I stole the artwork from the internet; I think it was all in the public domain.

For a nice summary of the legend behind this game, check out this website:
http://labete.7hunters.net/auvergne.htm
It has its fair share of typos, but there's a lot of information there.

Finally, I cribbed the title from an old French phrase. Apparently they referred to dusk as "the hour between dog and wolf". Sounds right to me.

Respectfully,

Scott Knipe
5-29-05
5:31 AM