

The Wolf Clans of Aria:

History: 2000 years ago, during the rise of the races, the god Tau grew envious of the other gods knowing that the races were not acknowledging him as much as they were the other gods. Without the approval of the gods Tau merged a small reclusive tribe of fey humanoid creatures with his favorite of the woodland beasts, the wolves, in an attempt to create a race that would worship only him. During the titan wars this Lycan clan roamed what is known today known Aria. During that time the Lycan tried very hard to distance themselves from the other inferior races which eventually proved crucial in their survival during the titan wars and subsequent war of the races. During the time of troubles between the titans and the other races the clan traveled deeper into the fey wood and took great measures to keep their existence hidden from those outside the borders of their realm. For thousands of years the clan roamed the fey wood, establishing three separate hunting areas which they called Winter Home, Summer Home and Spring Vale all named after the season the clan spent their hunting and raising off-spring. As the clan grew in size they began to cross paths with the other great race of the Fey Wood, the Sylvan. Tau and Ehlora both agreed that their followers must live in peace with one another if both peoples were to prosper so The Accord was reached between the more powerful Sylvan and the less advanced Lycan clan resulting in the clan splitting into 3 distinct groups with each clan claiming one of the original Fey Wood hunting grounds. In agreeing to split the clan into three groups the sylvan agreed to protect the Lycan from any threats and to aid the Lycan if summoned. Clan Stormwalker chose the western fey wood and claimed Winter Home as their main settlement. Clan Red Fang located in western fey wood and claimed Spring Vale and clan Sliver Mane located in southern fey wood laying claim to Summer Home. For thousands of years the Lycan have lived in peace alongside of the Sylvan into the current age. The Accord was carved into the bark of the Life Tree by Ehlora's own hand and is located deep in the fey wood, binding the sylvan and Lycan to this day. The Life Tree is considered sacred by the Sylvan as it is the only thing that has been touched directly by their goddess.

Religion: The Lycan clans of Aria all worship Tau with great reverence and consider him the father of their bloodline. Each Lycan clan is ruled by a council of nine elders who are both the spiritual leaders and the governing body for each clan. It is a long held belief among the clan's spiritual leaders that Luna approached Tau and offered to make him the most powerful among the gods if he would be her companion. Together with their combined power they would rule over the other gods and force their will on the races. Upon learning of Luna's plan, Ehlora, Taos mother, informed Tau that she would stand against him if he chose this path as it would upset the balance between the gods that had existed for many millennia. Tau listened to his mother's wisdom and chose to expose Luna and her plan to the other gods. After Luna learned that Tau had rejected her she was furious and in a moment of rage she cursed Tau and used dark forgotten magic on him, causing him to act like the beasts he controlled and becoming devoid of all rational thought. Luna's curse did not only affect Tau but also his most devoted priests and priestesses causing them to become half human and half beast at the sight of the symbol of her power, the full moon. Upon learning of her sons fate Ehlora instructed her followers, the sylvan, to hunt down and kill Tao's perverse priestesses and priests whom Luna

had cursed. To this day the sylvan are mortal enemies of the lycanthropes and continually hunt down and destroy the beasts where ever they are found in the realms.

Even though Tau's conscience was taken from him and he now runs with the beasts he once controlled, the Lycan clans still worship him as their god. When Tau was cursed by Luna and the bond with their god was severed, this caused the clans to search endlessly for Tau in an attempt to find their god once again. When the clans talk about their search for Tau they refer to this as "Seeking that which was lost". When members of the clan reach 18 years of age they are sent out from the clan for 2 years to "Seek that which was lost" and return to the tribe at the Festival of Eventide with news of their search. **Gideon is now at the end of his search and since meeting Ehlora and learning that he is her champion he is now ready to return to his tribe and tell the tale of his search. Gideon now believes that Tau is indeed still alive but lost to his people. Faith in Ehlora is the only way for his people to become greater than their ancestors and take their place as equals to the dominant races of man. Gideon needs to convince the council of elders that Tau is still the father of the Lycan clans but Ehlora is also now their mother. It will be hard for him to convince his people to forget their customs and faith in their god but this must be done for the bloodline to continue. Gideon believes that the dream he had of running through a forest fire to find Ehlora in a clearing symbolizes the burning of the world. The only way the Lycan clans will survive the future destruction of the realms is to accept Ehlora as their goddess. It will not be easy to convince his people to forsake the god that they have worshipped for two thousand years but they must accept Ehlora or perish.** There is the risk that he could be expelled from the clan for heresy or worse.

Social Structure: Each of the three Lycan clans is patriarchal with an emphasis placed on the care and raising of as many offspring as possible to ensure the continuance of the clan. Each clan consists of about 500 members and has a hunting area of a 50 mile radius from the clan homes. Males and sometimes females who are expert hunters are often given a higher status within the clan as they are seen as the key providers for the people. Being a hunter for the clan is an honor and the responsibility is taken very seriously. Sometimes the clan's most respected hunters are given the opportunity to make decisions along with the council of elders on matters that affect the clan's security. Once a year the clans unite at the summer solstice for the Feast of Eventide held in Winter Home, where Tau is worshiped, offerings are made in his name and the members of the clan dance and celebrate. The next feast and gathering of the clans is a month away and it is at this feast that the clan members who are out in the realms seeking that which is lost return to each tell the story of their travels and tell the elders if they found the bond they were seeking. **It is at this feast that Gideon plans on telling of his encounter with Ehlora, the vision of Ehlora and Tau and the severing of the souls, the conversation with Ehlora who appointed Gideon as her champion and the knowledge that the land is in blight due to the current condition of the king. Gideon will also inform his father and the council of elders of his intention to take Lilly as his companion.**

Winter Home: Winter Home is situated at the base of the mountain range and occupies a large cave in the foot hills of the mountains. The clan's temple to Tau and ruling council of elders reside in the large cave at the edge of the settlement. Outside the cave are numerous small houses made of wood and thatch which make up the Lycan settlement. The Lycan are only

allowed to use the wood from the forest floor and are not allowed to harm a living tree per the accord with the sylvan. Most homes resemble human settlements except these consist of a single room where the whole family lives, sleeps and eats. Most dwellings are modest but stoutly built with all decorations depicting an effigy of Tau or woodland scenes. All Lycan settlements are able to produce fine and masterwork leather or hide armors and clothing but must import anything made of metal since they do not have ability to mine minerals and refine the various ores. Rare herbs are also exported by the Lycan clans to various traders on the outskirts of the fey wood.