

# TRIBEBOOK:

# UKTENA™

## Seekers after the Forgotten

They follow the great water-serpent Uktena, the strange totem of mystical wisdom. They have imprisoned countless evil spirits and learned volumes of magical lore. There are no greater sorcerers among the werewolf tribes — but the Uktena have not gained such wisdom without cost. There is always a price.

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The Revised Tribebooks take a turn for the dark and secretive with **Tribebook: Uktena**. The mystics of the Garou Nation, the Uktena are masters of long-lost lore, able to bind evil spirits and fight the Wyrn with magic unknown to other tribes. Explore the depths of the Uktena's knowledge. Learn their blessings and curses, and their secret arts. If the Uktena don't know it, it's not worth knowing.

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# LEGENDS OF THE GAROU

## Of Dreams and Beasts

The dream took her under dark waters again. It had happened every night for what seemed like forever, once she was awake. Erishka Derr knew how to swim, had spent the occasional summer days splashing in the Gulf of Mexico, where the azure water moved quietly against the shore. But this dream wasn't one to remember with pleasure. The sea around her felt cold, not sun drenched. And... things surrounded her. Tall pillars made from crushed shell, though Erishka didn't understand how she knew that. Fins of invisible flesh touched her water-wrinkled skin, making her shiver in dread. And worst of all, the shadow without a form, an impossible animal of some kind: a silhouette with a long, lashing tail and a fanged maw. Each night, its voice became clearer through the frothing waters.

"Uktena's children are of the streams, of the rivers. They cover the earth and wash the faces of humans with ebony tears. Find what was lost, and return it to me, along with the secret that you cannot see."

The dream almost always ended the same way, with the long tail whipping around to strike her before she could dodge. She woke drenched in sweat, the hair on her arms becoming longer with the rising of the moon.

### Erishka's Notebook

*I killed my first enemy today. One of the pack leaders asked me to help him patrol the area near the caern, the bawn he called it, and I was eager to see the land, so I said yes. We were walking around the bawn when a monster burst through from the shadow world. It looked like a cross between a giant cricket and a fanged gecko. I thought I'd be more afraid, but maybe my instincts are*

*better than I know. I felt my body change as it did before, and my heart burned with hatred for this creature. Later, as we rested, the pack leader gave his approval. He didn't say much, but I could tell he was pleased. I've learned a lot since coming here—about the many tribes, the auspices and even the Wyrms, the Weaver and the Wyld. Today I learned I could fight and win.*

Erishka suppressed the urge to bounce around with excitement. Scarce a month had passed since she'd gone through what Grandmother called First Change. Fifteen years of life hadn't prepared the young half-Choctaw for anything like that. How come everybody seemed so sober most of the time? Erishka's heart swelled with joy, and she wished her mother could have lived to see her. Grandmother said that her mother had been called Dyes-with-Wyrm-Blood, or at least that's how it roughly translated, but Erishka's grasp of the language sucked, and she couldn't remember the Choctaw woman who'd left a two-year old child with a light-skinned father to return to her own people.

Erishka hadn't understood then how anyone could leave a baby, but now, with the whole Garou story, it made more sense. And it explained why her father, a successful professor of anthropology, had abruptly turned his interests from studying weaving methods of the southeastern Indians to examining rare textiles of Scandinavia. Anything to forget what had happened and distance himself from the inevitable. Work had always distracted him from Erishka. He wasn't cruel or careless, just absent-minded. A series of kindly housekeepers had guarded his energetic daughter until her fourteenth birthday when Grandmother had shown up. Erishka didn't think she was really her mother's mother, but she knew enough about

Choctaw folkways to realize it was a perfectly polite way to address an old woman.

Her father had accepted this new guardian with distracted ease, heading off on a yearlong sabbatical, seemingly resigned to the fact that he might or might not see Erishka again. Now, thinking back on it, she realized he must have known all about the werewolves, but he'd never breathed a word of it. Grandmother said her father was from old Creole blood, Kinfolk from many generations ago, and that his indifference was to hide the pain of loss—the loss of a wife and a child who belonged to Gaia, not him.

The only blemishes on her joy were the dreams, terrible nightmares that she hoped she could forget. It was spring when she went to Grandmother to ask about the fear each night brought.

Grandmother was boiling madder root over a fire, breathing in the musky fumes as she dipped long coils of reed into the soupy dyebath. Some women of the Mississippi Choctaw liked the modern chemical dyes, but Grandmother preferred the traditional ones: Brazilwood, alkanet, cochineal. She fixed them with the men's urine and scoffed at the young women who turned up their noses because the rich women with lacquered nails and too much turquoise paid handsomely for her 'all-natural' baskets at the pow-wows. After Erishka had shared the tale, Grandmother stirred.

"I had my eye on you for many years, watching from the shadows," the old woman explained. "Then, when I knew the time was right to tell you our story, I came for you. The roots told me the path, and the corn's rustling led me along."

"But how did you *know*? And what should I do about these dreams?" persisted the girl, unable to understand what the old woman really meant. Grandmother shrugged and wouldn't answer for a long time. Finally, she spoke, moving away from the past and into the future.

"You have work to do, granddaughter. You think it is all weaving baskets and chasing swamp rabbits on four legs? Dancing at the gatherings and clawing the enemy? You earn your keep."

"I don't mind hard work," Erishka retorted. "What do you want me to do? Where do I begin?"

Grandmother kept stirring. "Part of becoming one of us is the unraveling of mysteries. Start where the vision leads you. Water is life. Begin there."

So Erishka found herself bumming a ride with some of the locals on the rez down to the bay, a couple of hours away. They went for shrimp and fish; she traveled for the sake of unlocking the mystery preying on her mind.

The waters in the bay were calm that day; no distant waterspouts or impending storms loomed on the horizon. When the others went off to fish, she dug her feet in the warm sand. For now, it was pleasant. In a couple of months, she knew, the heat would be roasting. Lying back, Erishka stared up at the sky and waited. She had no idea if or when she'd get "inspired," but if this was how it was supposed to happen, then so be it.

Hours passed. Erishka sweated; the sun was hotter than it should have been for springtime. She lay down on her back, squinting into the bright light. The rush and retreat of the waves on the fine sand reminded her of slow breaths, and hers

instinctively slowed as well. The heat raised salty droplets on her skin, salty as the ocean, whose surface gave no hint as the secrets it held in its black, lung-crushing depths. Her mind pulled away, floating like driftwood on the sea, and she lost herself in the heat and the heartbeat of the gulf.

A winged shadow fell across her face. Erishka heard the frantic beating of feathers as a large pelican crashed to the earth near her feet. She recoiled, for it smelled of long-dead fish and rancid waters. With its long bill tucked against neck and body, it appeared to be mouthless, staring at her with two unblinking eyes. It croaked at her, and she heard words in the sound.

"The plume of my distant kin lies long forgotten. The quill must be broken, the spirit made free. Find it where the humans watch it, day after day, wondering at its age, knowing not what it means." The bird flew away, leaving Erishka staring after it in wonder.

Cold water doused the girl. Looking up, the hot sun was cooling against the waters of the bay, and the tide was capturing ground in a series of rushes. Hours had passed, and farther down the shore, she heard the calls of the Kin, finished with their work for the day.

All during the ride home, the young werewolf pondered the pelican's message. Somewhere, she surmised, there was a bird feather that contained a spirit, a talen. She had to find it and snap the quill to release a trapped spirit—that all made sense. But where was the thing? And what kind of bird feather was she searching for? It was like looking for a single shell on an endless shore. The clue had to be in the part about humans looking at it, maybe trying to study it... Then, a thought came to Erishka. Wasn't this the same sort of thing her human father had done? Taken relics from ancient cultures and scrutinized them in extreme detail? Puzzled out their origins and purpose? If that were so, she knew just where to begin her search.

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Erishka went the next day to the state university museum, which was in her hometown. It wasn't a huge school, but the museum had a few impressive collections. Some had been donations, but she knew that others had been taken without permission, from Choctaw, Creek and a number of other nations. After wandering around for an hour, she was ready to admit defeat. Nothing on display even remotely seemed to fit the pelican's description. Then, she caught sight of some students from the archaeology department; a few looked familiar, but she couldn't call them by name. They headed into the back of the museum, towards the lab. *Could they have it back there, not on display?* she wondered. *Maybe it's worth checking out later tonight.*

Killing time until the moon rose was easy. Erishka had forgotten the simple pleasures of walking around campus, checking out new books in the library, seeing people her own age without the extra burdens she'd been given. But she felt nervous, anxious and on edge, all at once, as the day turned into night. An almost palpable relief washed over her when she saw the moon, her moon, already well above the horizon. Creeping behind one of the buildings, the young werewolf crouched a moment in the darkest pool of shadow she could find. Fingering a small square of hide from a water moccasin,

she began her whispered prayer for Great Uktena's favor in tonight's hunt, "Great Uktena, Breaker of Secrets, Searcher in the Dark Places..." It was a ritual Grandmother taught her, imploring the tribe's totem spirit to aid her search for lore; it was a ritual that up until now she'd never needed. Now she cast about until she found a puddle left over from yesterday's shower. The half-faced moon glittered in the water's shallow surface, and with her mind focused, Erishka let herself fall into the reflection. Icy cold swallowed her from foot to shoulder to head, but as she tumbled to the ground, she felt the physical world pass away and the land of the spirits open before her.

The landscape was much changed. Where the newest buildings stood, there was nothing but the afterimages of pines, now empty of animal spirits. The older structures seemed solid enough, though recent renovations had not yet left an impact on their spiritual counterparts. The moon seemed brighter, larger, and the world was drenched in the silvery light. She marveled at the eerie stillness of a campus devoid of students. Indeed, she saw far fewer spirits than were found at the caern. Some electricity spirits flashed around light poles or flickered dimly through underground cables. A small antlike spirit bounced through the air — no doubt secure in its PDA nest in someone's backpack. But all was generally quiet at this hour of the spiritual night.

The museum retained its physical shape, but to her vision, it was constructed of threads, some thick, some gossamer. Walking to the wall, she tested the strength of the strands, then took on her war form, reared back and slashed at the weakest ones. They gave way easily, but as she reached through to pull herself inside the structure, her arm went numb. She tried to withdraw, but her limb was held fast by a thousand micro-strands of webbing. Growling in frustration, she ripped at the web wall with a leg, only to feel another spray of webbing sink into her foot, trapping it a moment before she jerked it free.

Movement writhed in the darkness beyond. Erishka reached forward, grabbed, and yanked a startled, metallic spider-like spirit to her. With a roar, she stretched down and began biting legs, even as the spirit snapped at her. It nipped at her with sharp mandibles until she lost her grip and dropped it. With another hard pull, she wrenched her arm free of the webbing, and turned again to deal with the pattern spider flopping around on its two remaining legs. A series of brutal slashes, and the spirit lay broken and inert, the light in its eyes fading to darkness. Stomping her feet, she felt the numbness replaced by a throbbing ache. More time passed before she could fully close her hand.

Ignoring the pain in her limbs, Erishka moved forward, past the thin webs covering the building. *Something's here!* she



thought, feeling a tingle at the base of her spine. Ahead, past the dim splashes of light coming from the display cases, she saw a brighter light emanating from the lab. Moving closer, she spotted flashing brief sparks against the moonlit landscape, in shades of crimson and azure. The source of the light was a strange object resting on a worktable. She pushed through the wall between the world — colder, thicker now — and settled into the quiet, dim lab room. Drawers and trays lay neatly side-by-side on the workbenches, with many more in cabinets lining the walls. She looked down on a tray with feathers, bird skulls, and leg bones, but she knew which object she was here for.

That it was a big feather was readily apparent, but it seemed covered by a black mesh. It took the young werewolf a few moments to realize what it was—a thick-quilled turkey tail feather woven with the coarse hairs of the bird's beard. Erishka had seen wild male turkeys a few times. They were a cross between comical and stately, with their large brown and white feathers on display, combined with the wagging purplish heads and the tufty beards that hung from their chests. But this object was different—not only was it the remains of a living creature, it was the vessel for a spirit. Faintly twining around the quill were tiny glyphs, Garou glyphs, in dark ink. She carefully plucked the fetish from the table, barely noting the museum ID tag that dangled from the feather by a cotton string; tomorrow it would be relegated to a list of lost artifacts by museum staff.

The Uktena flicked on a row of overhead lights and looked around the bright room for a reflection. In the end, she had to settle for the reflection in the dusty glass of a cabinet face. Even with the reflection, it took her longer to squeeze through the cold, suffocating barrier than she cared for. Yet her troubles weren't over, for where she pushed through the webbing of the Penumbra wall, two more spiderlike Weaver spirits were mending the tear. At least a pair of the spirit's eyes fixed on her as she approached. Erishka had no desire to fight two pattern spiders at once, so she cast her eyes about the display hall. Above her, an electricity spirit wiggled in a spotlight like a tadpole in a pool. In the tongue of the spirits, she hailed the arcing blue electricity spirit. Though it continued to turn and thrash, the sharp smell of ozone told the Half-Moon that for better or worse she had its attention. "I ask a favor of you. Drive off those two spirits," she continued, pointing at the wall. "It will be a funny prank, won't it, to see them jump?" The bulb sparked at the thought of mischief — or perhaps with anger at the impertinent request. "And for this little joke, I pledge that no light in my Grandmother's house will dim for a full phase of the moon." *She'll understand the chiminage, she thought. I hope she'll understand her electric bill.*

The electric tadpole slowed its mad revolutions, then vanished from its haven. An instant later, it arced from a wall socket, dancing between the spiders and making them skitter away, disappearing in a terminal at the other end of the hall. The electric spirit threw a spark at the werewolf's foot before flashing into the socket. As the unpleasant tingle faded from her leg, Erishka thought how pleased with itself the little spirit looked.

Tearing through the half-repaired wall, she stepped out again into the penumbral night. Hesitating only a moment, she picked up the quill and with a swift motion, snapped it in two.

A misty form poured from the broken quill, and a few seconds later, a large male turkey preened and gobbled before her, the faint azure light still clinging to its leathery head. The spirit seemed quite animated, maybe even pleased, and as it spread its wings, it pecked at the remains of the talen she'd let fall to the ground. The quill itself disappeared, but the stiff hairs remained. The turkey pushed them towards her with its beak, and then turned and flew away. Thoughtfully, Erishka bent and touched the beard, surprised to find it quite solid. She remained a few moments, then found her way back to the waking world.

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"And the turkey left these beard feathers," she finished, hoping her elder would tell her precisely what had happened.

Grandmother was stirring yet another batch of natural dyestuff. "The spirit made you a gift. He was grateful to be freed. The question now is what are you going to do with the gift?"

Erishka shrugged. "I don't know. Perhaps there's a sept that reveres Turkey as their totem. Maybe finding them is a good place to start."

Grandmother nodded as she put down her stick. "Perhaps. Maybe you can do two tasks at once. The sept leader wishes you to escort a Kinfolk who has messages for the tribe. There are many places to go and many people to see. Kin normally cannot go into our sacred places, but with you at his side, he will be allowed. We have money, and you will use it to travel in this world, not the other. Time enough for that later. Besides, it isn't possible for Kin to see the shadow lands the way we can." She stirred some more and then added, "And you can seek your answers about the spirit's message. You leave at dawn. Go make ready."

Erishka shrugged. This could be fun. She'd half expected to be sent on some kind of sacred quest or at least undergo a sort of puberty ceremony, like some of the Indians she'd read about in her father's books. Maybe for werewolves passing through their First Change was all the sort of ritual they needed, as opposed to spending so many moons mixing clay for a sacred pot or whatever. This wasn't going to be so hard after all.

#### Erishka's Notebook

*Today I leave with the Kinfolk, and I'm supposed to be his bodyguard while he travels to see a bunch of other werewolves. Grandmother won't tell me many details, but said that he needed my help and protection. I don't really know that much about being a member of the tribe. They tell me I am of a werewolf tribe called Uktena, and I think that has something to do with a water monster. Actually, no one here has told me anything more about what Uktena is like. Dad had a book by some old dead ethnographer, and the Uktena was a big snake with a rock in its forehead. But that's all I remember. Maybe there's not that much to know. I can change shape easily now, and I've spent some time at the sacred caern and in the otherworld. I know the names of the sept members and which moon face they serve. I think I remember all the tribe names, though there are a couple that seem really similar. Possibly this Kinfolk guy knows something, and he can tell me more about the tribes, both the others and my own.*

*I had a dream before dawn. A shroud of fog hung over my eyes, and when I reached up to part it, my hand came away wet with dew. In the distance I heard a waterfall, and someone was throwing*